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CONTENTS

COMMENTS . . . . Page 381
DOLLAR DIPLOMACY 383
SCIENCE AND THE STATE. By Ritchie Calder . 384
BLOW OUR OWN TRUMPET. By Sagittarius . 384
A LONDON DIARY. By Critic 385
BOOM TOWN AT CHURCH HOUSE. By Freda White 385
GERMAN UNIVERSITIES. By W. W. Schutz . 386
TWO CONCERTS. By Desmond Shawe-Taylor . 387
PUBLIC BENEFACTORS. By Roger Marvell . . 387
THE SACRED FLAME. By Siriol Hugh Jones . 387
RADIO NOTES. By Edward Sackville West . 387
THE MOVIES. By William Whitebait . . 388
PLAYS AND PICTURES. By Stephen Potter . . 388
THIS ENGLAND 388
CORRESPONDENCE 388
From A. P. Ryan; Herbert Read; Geoffrey Pyke; H. Quinton; H. H. Symonds; S. A. Cooper; and others.
BOOKS IN GENERAL. By Peter Quennell . Page 391
REVIEWS:
Corners of the War. By G. W. Stonier . . 392
Eccentric Victorians. By Raymond Mortimer 392
District Officer. By Naomi Lewis . . . 392
Master of Ceremonies. By Brian Howard . 393
Chinese Treasury. By Dorothy Woodman . 393
The Zionist's Case. By Sidney Dark . . 394
WEEK-END COMPETITIONS 395

TRUMPETS OUT OF TUNE

WHEN the electorate voted the Labour Party to office, with a massive Parliamentary majority, the Opposition had two courses open to it. Conceding that the Government had a mandate for its declared legislative programme, it could play the part of reasonable and constructive critic in the shaping of detailed policy, endeavouring to present to Parliament a coherent set of alternative, practical proposals of its own. Or it could adopt the attitude of purely negative obstruction, refusing to accept the validity of the electorate's verdict, discarding reason, and mobilising against the Government the confused emotions of prejudice and resentment. At first it looked as though Mr. Churchill, thinking better of the demagogy of his pre-election broadcasts, was inclined to choose the first course. He expressed the hope that this Parliament would be "fruitful," and disclaimed any intention of "joining issue" on those nationalisation measures which, as he put it, "raised no matter of principle." But if Mr. Churchill and his Party ever seriously entertained the idea of helping to make Parliament, under a Labour Ministry, a constructive Council of State, this mood was short-lived. Perhaps inevitably so. It would have meant adoption, in effect, by the Tories of the contemporary Liberal reformist line, and it would have involved the production of a positive, intelligible Conservative programme. Neither of these conditions was tolerable to a Party wedded to blind protection of private interests, and whose only plan was to have no planning. So, perforce, Mr. Churchill has had to raise the Tory standard in an all-out anti-Socialist crusade. The walls of the Labour Jericho are to be assailed, in and out of season, by the clamour of Tory trumpets.

In this trumpeting there is a very audible absence of tune. Mr. Churchill's strident denunciations of Labour "tyranny" accord ill with the views of many employers and managers of industry who voted for Conservative candidates, yet are ready to recognise the necessity for overall planning of the nation's economy. Though they sit on the same Front Bench, Harold Macmillan and Richard Law have little in common with the political philosophy of, say, Oliver Lyttelton and Brendan Bracken. But in the eyes of the Tory Party managers this does not matter: be it loud enough to drown the voice of reason, cacophony's the thing. Professing the championship of "the People," the Tories are calculating that they can confuse every issue, blaming doctrinaire Socialism for unavoidable shortages, identifying planning with restrictions and red tape. Parliamentary time can be wasted by votes of censure; Bills can be obstructed by factious amendments; and schemes of nationalisation can be held up by extortionate demands for compensation, while entrepreneurs in non-nationalised sectors of industry plead "bureaucratic interference" as an excuse for ca' canny. Simultaneously, while doing their best to impede by these methods the working of Parliamentary democracy, the Tories will use every artifice to depict Labour as democracy's enemy. The purpose of the provocative Tory pamphlet calling for recruits to form "an efficient bodyguard for candidates and other speakers who are liable to receive rough treatment" is probably not, at this stage at least, to raise a Fascist force; it is to discredit the Government by implying that Socialism and hooliganism are inseparable.

We do not rate too highly the dangers of these Opposition tactics, any more than we attach undue importance to the re-emergence of Oswald Mosley as promoter of a Fascist publishing house or the antics of the "Christian Reformers," whose leaders proclaim their recognition of Adolf Hitler as the Living God. The defeat of the Axis did not free Europe or Britain from the threat of reaction, in many guises; and, if Socialists are off their guard, the history of the Weimar Republic or of the Popular Front in France may be re-enacted. But before Tory propaganda (ignoring, for the moment, the activities of a clique of 18B *détenus*) can seriously influence the public mind, material conditions in this country—unemployment, shortage of houses, goods and foodstuffs—must get much worse than they are to-day.

This need not happen. All that is requisite to defeat every Opposition attack is determination and administrative efficiency on the Government's part. There must be no question of compromising principles: from the long-term objective—a national economy planned in the public interest and a more equitable distribution of wealth—there can be no departure. It is the more essential that the Government should demonstrate that planning does not mean Departmental delays and hesitations; that obstructions will be swept decisively away and difficulties boldly faced and overcome; and that, in a word, a big instalment of Socialism can be made to work quickly with convincing success. The Government can do it if it has the vision and the courage; if it eschews a foreign policy which involves too great a call on our limited man-power resources, and if it does not hesitate at home to assume responsibilities for the initiative which capitalism in decadence can no longer provide.

Britain's Balance of Payments

The figures, now published, of Britain's overseas trade for the first nine months of 1945 have an obvious bearing on certain facets of the U.S. loan issue. The gap between the values of retained imports and exports, even in the July-September quarter, was still very large. Excluding from the export figures the special relief shipments to Europe, the visible deficit was at the rate of £680 million a year. On the import side, some economies can clearly be effected if the State is still free to ration foreign exchange to importers. For example, in the nine months, we imported nearly 3,400 million gallons of refined petroleum, at a cost of £125 million, as compared with under 2,000 million gallons, costing £30 million, in the corresponding period of 1938. With military requirements reduced and civilian rationing still in force, there is scope here for drastic pruning. On the other hand, food imports are probably not far above the irreducible minimum; and, if we are to have full employment, we must expect a considerable increase in imports of raw materials. That is, on the present level of prices, we must cope with net imports near the £1,000 million mark annually. If the account is to balance (and "invisible" exports cannot make a big contribution), British exports must rise, in value, by approximately 200 per cent. With reconversion hardly under way, the 1945 export figures mean little in relation to future possibilities; but the task of securing markets for something like £600 million of additional exports will not be easy. If British exports are exposed to the full blast of aggressive American competition, and all forms of bilateral deals or other "discrimination" are barred; it is likely to be impossible.

Big Powers and Little Powers

President Truman's suggestion that there need be no further meetings of the Big Three cannot be taken as a serious statement of policy. The Big Three Conferences, from Teheran to Potsdam, were all based on Mr. Roosevelt's realistic view that the immediate problems of the peace settlement must be made by the Powers which had done the chief fighting. Unless Mr. Truman is prepared for, say, Czechoslovakia to have a voice in the future of Japan and the American occupation of strategic islands in the Pacific, he can scarcely expect the U.S.S.R. to regard Fascist Argentina as a suitable Nation-member of an organisation to decide the future of Austria or the peace treaty with Italy. When *Pravda* objects to proposals "restricting the national sovereignty of members of the United Nations," the U.S.S.R. is really expressing her scepticism about the whole conception of U.N.O. That fear will certainly be justified unless the Big Three at least agree on the urgent issues of the peace settlement. The quickest way to discredit U.N.O. would be to call a World Assembly to settle treaty problems in which most of the member states had no special interest, and which would in any case be settled in agreement or unilaterally by the Big Three Powers.

France Nationalises the Banks

The new French Government has lost no time in introducing and securing the Assembly's approval for its measure of bank nationalisation, which covers the four biggest deposit banks in France as well as the *Banque de France*. The Finance Commission of the Assembly would have liked the measure to go further, so as to include both other big deposit banks and at least the two leading French banks engaged mainly in operations of credit and investment overseas—the *Banque de Paris et du Pays-Bas* and the *Banque de l'Union Parisienne*. It was rightly pointed out that these commercial banks have in the past been even more active in applying private financial pressure to Governments than the domestic deposit banks which are being taken over; but M. Pleven and the Government retorted that the continued independence of these banks was vital to the recovery of French foreign trade and overseas influence. For the time being the Finance Commission agreed to the dropping of its proposal to take over these banks, but only after exacting a promise that the Government would submit within two months a proposal for their reform and future control. Thus, the Government has gone some way towards full public control of finance, but has stopped short of touching the potentially most dangerous part of the old system. Over this issue, there is plainly a further fight to come.

Turn for the Better in Greece

Having persuaded the Regent to avoid precipitating a further constitutional crisis, Mr. Bevin is beginning to show results for his personal application to the problems of Greece. The Sophoulis Cabinet has already given signs that, in spite of the age of its leader, it lacks neither will nor initiative of its own. It has begun well by releasing most of the prisoners held in Greek gaols for their part in the Middle East mutinies in 1943 and, on the economic side, it has already secured a sharp rise in the value of the inflated drachma. It still appears, however, to be encountering difficulties from the British authorities in Athens. Over the week-end, M. Sophoulis and M. Sofianopoulos met General Scobie and the British Ambassador to ask for permission to purge Right extremists from the army and police. This,, it is reported, was refused. As great power rests in the hands of the police and army, especially in rural districts, a Cabinet which is denied the right to substitute moderate and democratic officials for the monarchists and the collaborators who were drafted into responsible positions by previous Governments is actually denied the opportunity to restore more balanced political conditions. M. Sophoulis should not give in on this vital issue. Nor should he hope to secure the favours of Sir Reginald Leeper by broadening his Cabinet by including representatives of the Right. The E.A.M. delegation, which arrived in London this week, again insisted that, whilst E.A.M. is willing to participate in the Sophoulis Cabinet and continues to support it, its claim for inclusion will not be pressed to a point which might prejudice the administration's hopes of securing order and Allied assistance. This is our second chance in Greece. Mr. Bevin must see to it that no unnecessary obstacles are put in the way of M. Sophoulis and his associates.

Azerbaijan and the U.S.S.R.

Replying to the British Note last week, the Kremlin has endorsed the action of the Soviet officer commanding in the Russian Zone of Persia, who refused to allow Persian reinforcements to enter his area to deal with an Azerbaijan "revolt" whose extent still seems to have been exaggerated. The Russian version insists that peaceful demonstrations were broken up by the local gendarmerie, and that, if they had permitted the arrival of fresh Persian units, the consequent disorders would have been even more serious and might have involved Soviet troops. We know too little of the facts to comment on this explanation, which may be perfectly correct. We do know that in recent months the number of provocative attacks on progressive and nationalist groups has increased. In calling for a complete end to the occupation by January 1st, the State Department has asked for the impracticable. It will be difficult enough to evacuate the few thousand American personnel now in Persia by the end of this month; it is certainly unrealistic to ask the Russians to withdraw nearly seventy-five thousand men at such short notice. The Americans must realise this. Both Britain and the United States are displaying great anxiety to get the Russians out of Persia. None of the Powers trust each other; London and Washington are quite unwilling to accept Russian assurances that the Tripartite Treaty will be fully respected or that assistance is not being given to an Azerbaijani movement aiming at complete separation from the Iranian State. We should have more confidence in the injured protestations of the Teheran Government if it were purged of its corruption and intrigue with British and American interests. Its main concern at present seems to be the creation of a Red Scare with an eye on the coming elections.

U.S. Labour Troubles

Mr. Truman's Labour-Management Conference in the United States has broken down, as it was pretty certain to do from the first. There is not even the beginning of an approach to an agreement between the views of the two sides on the basic principles of industrial control. Management—which, significantly, in American parlance means the employers—is still strongly hostile to many practices of collective bargaining which among us are generally recognised. In particular, there was failure to agree on any definition of "managerial functions," which the employers wished so to define as to exclude all concern on the union side with matters of economic policy. There was disagreement over the right of foremen and supervisory workers to belong to unions, over the rights of collective bargaining conferred under the New Deal and strengthened in wartime, and over the question of arbitration in trade disputes. There were, in addition, disputes between the rival trade union bodies; and in these Mr. John Lewis significantly tended to side with the A.F. of L. against the C.I.O. In face of the breakdown, which involves a failure to find any solution of the labour troubles now sweeping across America, there is renewed talk in reactionary circles in Congress of anti-labour legislation, including the cancellation of the protection given by the Labour Relations Act and similar measures, and even provisions, *à la* Taff Vale, for exacting damages from unions whose members strike in breach of contract—or even without such breach. In short, labour trouble seems to be brewing on a large scale; and a big section of the employers appears to be spoiling for a fight.

Regionalism for Gas

The recommendations of the Heyworth Committee on the structure and organisation of the gas industry are interesting, if only for the fact that public ownership is urged on grounds of efficiency by a Committee which was set up by the Coalition Government and whose chairman is the head of Unilever Ltd. Here is a case of big business dissenting from Mr. Churchill's anti-Socialist line. The Committee proposes that the 1,047 gas undertakings in this country should be reorganised in ten Regional Boards, each consisting of a chairman, three full-time and three part-time directors, appointed by the Ministry of Fuel and Power. The stock of existing undertakings is to be compulsorily purchased on terms settled by a tribunal, and the capital of the Boards is to be wholly in fixed-interest forms guaranteed by the Government. Provided that the terms of compensation do not saddle the Boards with an undue burden of fixed charges, the Committee's proposals provide a basis on which the Government might well act. For the gas industry, regional organisation is economically sound; the actual producing units need not be particularly large, provided development and distribution are co-ordinated over sufficiently wide areas. We suggest, however, that there is need for a Central Board to concert price policy as between regions and to plan the development of the industry as a whole in relation to other forms of power.

The Friendly Societies' Case

It will be unfortunate if the Government cannot find means of associating the *bona fide* Friendly Societies and the Trade Unions with the administration of the new social insurance scheme. That a place should be found for them—as distinct from the mere Collecting Societies and the Insurance Companies—was suggested by Sir William Beveridge in his Report; and, at the least, a great many Labour candidates in the General Election gave support to this proposal, and the Labour Party was widely understood to be committed to doing something to meet the claim. It is not, of course, a question of continuing the "approved society" status of the bodies concerned. That was not proposed in the Beveridge Report, and has never been in question except among those who put forward the same claims for all types of "approved society," including those attached to the Insurance Companies. All that was proposed was that Friendly Societies and Trade Unions paying substantial benefits of their own and maintaining an effective democratic branch organisation should be "associated" in some way with the administration of the new scheme. The Whitehall bureaucracy would no doubt prefer, while it is on the job, to make a clean sweep of all influences not under its direct control; but we adjure Mr. Griffiths to stand up to his bureaucrats, and think again.

PARLIAMENT : The Vote of Censure

Wednesday

For a week the Tories had been in training for their great two days. They had decided at last to become a real Opposition and to oppose everything. Their obstruction of the Finance Bill had been kept within reasonable limits by the sheer force of the Chancellor's personality. On Monday they tried their luck again when the House sat in Committee on the Housing Materials Bill. But they were abashed by the Lancashire competence and good humour of George Tomlinson; and when they grew a little contumacious after dinner, they were dazed into silence by another firework display from the Minister of Health whose brilliance was only enhanced by its irrelevance. Tuesday's obstruction to the "Electors and Jurors Bill," again in Committee of the full House, was so inane that it merely provided evidence for the Select Committee on Procedure of how much Parliamentary time can be wasted by the Opposition.

Meanwhile, outside the House, Mr. Churchill's taste in rhetoric and his eighteenth-century contempt for economics had cut away the ground for a serious vote of censure. He had provided the Government with a perfect alibi for its real weaknesses and rendered impossible any serious or constructive criticism by his own supporters. Wednesday's debate was bound to be not merely a shadow battle—that, after only four months of this Parliament, was inevitable—but a battle about shadows, an ideological talking match. The Conservatives chose to call the Government doctrinaire. But at least the Government's doctrines belong to this century, not to the age of Marlborough.

Oliver Lyttelton went in first. Both in appearance and in manner he is still somehow the City promoter who may bluster his way through a shareholders' meeting, but never quite reaches the intellectual level of Parliament. The House grew very restive after nearly an hour of his ponderous generalities, which culminated in the remarkable statement that nationalisation is inflationary. Hugh Gaitskell, promoted to be the first Government spokesman, countered neatly that he had never before heard that epithet applied to a transfer from equities to gilt-edged securities. But, despite some bright patches his speech just failed to achieve the stature required. New Members are beginning to realise the difference between making a couple of good points in an empty House and delivering a real speech which contributes substantially to the debate. No one succeeded in crossing that chasm on Wednesday.

Stafford Cripps rose to speak in a half-empty House, but it filled very quickly to listen to a formidable forensic display. The President of the Board of Trade is still the slightly inhuman mixture of the masterly lawyer and the dogmatic moralist. He stood rigid at the despatch box, his only movements the fastidious lifting of his handkerchief to his nostrils, while he quietly flayed his opponents. Once only did he permit himself a sudden movement of the body. At the end of his deadly bout with Mr. Churchill, he suddenly leant forward, his arm outstretched, his finger pointing as though at the criminal caught out in perjury during cross-examination. Detecting a "sea-green incorruptible" the Tories seemed to be listening for the tumbrils.

After this the debate tailed away. Harold Macmillan was right to stress that he had been away from the House for a long time. He has not yet caught the mood of this new Parliament.

The evening was rescued by two speeches from the sidelines. Vernon Bartlett's still small voice speaks for a very large section of the country which cannot make up its mind whether it dislikes Party politics or the Conservatives more. The high spot was Mr. Maxton, a Shakespearean performance from a bygone age. In twenty minutes he taught the Tories more about the real meaning for their class of the Labour victory than all the Government spokesmen put together. That is one advantage of retiring to the sideline. Mr. Maxton can soliloquise without responsibility. Unless Mr. Churchill stages a come-back tomorrow, this first Vote of Censure will have only proved one thing—that the Government has no opposition to fear except on its own side of the House.

Phineas

DOLLAR DIPLOMACY

The Censure Debate in the Commons was a shadow-battle, which the Government gladly accepted because the Conservative Party failed to raise, and never will raise, the fundamental issue. That issue is the status of this country in the atomic age. Shall we seek, with the aid of American dollars and as partners in an Anglo-Saxon alliance, to hold our present position as one of the Big Three—a great World Power, armed to enforce a foreign policy appropriate to that role? Or shall we accept a new status as the greatest of the "Middle" Powers?

The alternatives are clear, and the Government cannot avoid them. Yet there is disquieting evidence that the Labour Government, avoiding a decision in principle, is permitting that decision to be made by force of events. This evidence is, in the first place, the British attitude in the loan negotiations in Washington and, secondly, the Government's hesitancy on the size of our post-war forces.

Consider the loan negotiations first. When Lend-Lease was suddenly cut off last summer, we argued that we should go forward "if necessary, alone": appeasement of American capitalism on that issue would render impossible our independence, let alone the Socialist planning of Great Britain. The reports in the American press of the progress of the negotiations have not modified our view, though they have underlined the temptation to which the Government is exposed. It is certain that, in the event of a breakdown of the loan scheme, this country would be hard pressed. The Government would have to impose more drastic rationing of consumers' goods and services. We should have fewer cigarettes and films, and less petrol. We should be desperately short of some essential raw materials, including cotton. True, the Government could reckon on an immediate and universal response to its explanation of why the negotiations had failed. But how long would the public accept these new austerities? Would not the Opposition use the opportunity to turn resentment against the Socialist Government? Moreover, it is idle to assume that, if negotiations had broken down, the sterling bloc would rally unitedly behind us. No nation, not even our most loyal friend, New Zealand, likes to be dragooned by a debtor, in a fashion too reminiscent of Dr. Schacht. If the negotiations had failed, South Africa, and possibly India, might have been reluctant to increase their loans to us.

These are some of the arguments in favour of signing the agreement and obtaining the immediate relief which a renewed flow of American dollars will bring. Yet the terms, as forecast, leave us unconvinced. In the eyes of the U.S. administration and of Congress, any agreement signed now, whatever the published terms, will be not merely an economic but a political agreement. It will line up Great Britain as a junior partner of the U.S.A. That will be the price they demand for our cigarettes and our films. The bill may not be rendered by the Americans in the early aftermath of the signature; but in the end the Cabinet will be faced with a choice of either accepting American dictation of Britain's internal economy, or of quarrelling with America in order to keep faith with the British people.

Both these courses would be disastrous. We believe it would have been preferable, despite the short-term sacrifices involved, to suspend the negotiations for the time being. The economic results would have been felt, not only in Britain, but also in America. Very soon the tobacco, cotton, and film producers would have felt the effect on their pockets of the Administration's intransigence to this country. A more realistic atmosphere would have been introduced into Congress debates; and, within a relatively short time, we believe, a situation would have been created in which a better agreement could be negotiated. Nor should we underrate the effect on the rest of the world of such a stand. It would, indeed, have been our economic Dunkirk; and it would have rallied to us precisely those forces which at the present moment tend to dismiss Great Britain as a dependency of the U.S.A.

Turn now to the closely related problem of our post-war military strength. Apparently the Government still intends to keep over two million men in the armed Forces next summer; and Government spokesmen have indicated their desire to begin the manufacture of atomic bombs in this country. Is it really the intention of a Socialist Cabinet that Great Britain, which is completely indefensible against atomic attack, should seek to maintain indefinitely the armies and armaments of a Great Power? If we really intend to do so, the Government should now be planning the movement of the Capital of the Commonwealth away from London and its dispersal over the Empire.

We are in danger of committing the tragic mistakes made by France in 1918. By pouring out her national strength in quantities far greater than she could afford, France won the last war. She lost the peace by maintaining the armaments and the foreign policy of a Great Power when she could not afford to do so. To-day Great Britain, in terms of man-power, goods and cash, is in a worse position even than France after the last war. If we draw largely on the American credit and do not lighten our commitments abroad, we shall be jeopardising our economic independence, in order partly, at least, to finance gigantic Service expenditure. The only political advantage of accepting the American loan would be that we could thereby cut down our Service expenditure and rely on American armaments, financed out of American taxes, to defend the 49th State. To accept Bretton Woods unconditionally, and simultaneously to maintain great armaments, is a policy of self-destruction.

It is sometimes suggested that we should get hold of the dollars now: as for the political conditions, we can get round them when the time comes. The British Government have, technically, a complete answer to the charge that it intends any such Machiavellianism. As the result of the protracted negotiations, the British representatives, it will be argued, have succeeded in inserting escape clauses into the terms of the loan which will operate under certain given circumstances; and these circumstances can be relied on, sooner or later, to arise. Britain has not signed away anything. On the contrary, under this Agreement, does she not retain freedom to introduce a planned economy and to organise trade both inside and outside the Empire, according to her interests? Nothing substantial has been sacrificed. Let us therefore accept the dollars in the confident assumption that, inevitably, in due course, the developments which we foresee will have matured. Then the escape clauses will come into operation and free us from the strait-jacket into which the Americans would like to fit us.

This is persuasive pleading. But it is nothing more; and there is a devastating answer to it. Put that argument in that form to Congress, and see how it goes down. No! That is not the picture of the Agreement in American eyes. The fact is that the gap between Congress and the House of Commons on this issue is now so wide that the loan, like Bretton Woods, will have to be sold to Congress as one thing and to the Commons as something totally different. For it is not merely an agreement between the experts, negotiating in secret, which is required, but an agreement between America and Britain. If the loan is pushed through, by the use of quite different interpretations of its significance on each side of the Atlantic, Anglo-American relations will be bedevilled for a generation. To argue that the letter of the bond provides escape clauses is to burke the glaring fact that Congress is not prepared to lend us money in order to build our planned economy; while we are not prepared to sacrifice our freedom of action for the sake of the loan.

We do not underrate our need for a foreign credit to enable reconstruction to get under way; but this does not dispose of the consideration that, unless America liberalises her trade policy, Britain may be undertaking commitments which no Socialist Government can fulfil. Given successful planned expansion of our production and exports, the gamble may come off. It will not come off unless we determine to shoulder, abroad, only such responsibilities as are commensurate with our strength. We are now a Middle Power, in a double sense of the word. Economically, we stand half-way between the two Great Powers and Powers such as the French Empire. But politically also, the Social Democracy which we are building could be a mean between the extremes of American capitalism and Russian Communism.

We can only establish this new middle position if we show that we are still determined, as far as possible, to work our own passage home. This means that borrowed dollars, if they are to be accepted, must be husbanded for the purposes of industrial re-equipment and civilian production. We can only avoid becoming America's insolvent debtor, exposed to continual pressure from our creditor, if we cut down our armed Services to genuine police forces, leaving the production of atom bombs to the two nations which have some chance of surviving their use. By building our policy on these two principles, we shall strengthen our moral position *vis-à-vis* Russia and America and win the leadership of the smaller nations. As a genuinely independent Middle Power, we can mediate between America and Russia and work for that regional association in Western Europe which, we are convinced, is as necessary for France, Belgium and Holland as it is for us. In the assembly of U.N.O. we should lead a group of nations with a common outlook instead of appearing, as we do now, to be the junior partner of one great capitalist Power.

We realise that this aspect of Cabinet policy will never be explored by His Majesty's Opposition. Indeed, if the Cabinet agrees to the loan and maintains huge armaments, it will be carrying out a Churchillian policy, despite Mr. Churchill's windy opposition to it. For this is where the road divides. A Socialist policy for Great Britain involves a real independence of America and a realistic acceptance of our new status as a Middle Power.

SCIENCE AND THE STATE

THE Government is going to have a stock-taking of Britain's scientific resources. It has set up a Committee on Scientific Man-power. This action is timely because the tremendous achievements of British science in war have masked the fact that it was another case of the many owing so much to so few, and that, in terms of the heavy demands which this country will have to make on them, our scientists are adequate in quality but not in quantity. On the basis of the Central Register it is commonly estimated that our total muster of "scientists" is 45,000. This figure, however, includes, in addition to pure pedagogues, graduates in a wide range of subjects irrelevant to our specific needs. Of the scientists whose contributions saved us in the war, the élite corps consisted of a few hundreds.

Mobilisation, under their leadership, of scientific "other ranks" meant that our laboratories, our universities, our technical colleges and our schools were drained of everyone passably resembling a scientist. We snatched children from the classroom and turned them into radar specialists. We gave forcing courses at the universities. Students who would, normally, be emerging now as scientific teachers and research-workers, have been earning a living as semi-skilled scientists, with intensive but limited specialisation. Our great teachers and research-leaders were diverted to more urgent tasks and one can sympathise with the heart-cry of the retiring President of the Royal Society, Sir Henry Dale, that they should get back to their laboratories.

> The experience of these men should help them still to serve the nation in peace, by counsel and by advocacy, when the needs of scientific reconstruction demand these. I venture to hope, however, that there will be no such demands on the time and energies of those who should now be our leaders in research, as to keep them away from their benches and their studies and deprive younger men of their inspiration.

Sir Henry has posed the quandary. The nation and the world has discovered the need for Scientific Method as well as for Scientific Research. In the critical days of the war scientists were called upon not only to produce ingenious instruments but to determine how they should be used. They were consulted on, and frequently determined, strategy and tactics. They examined Service organisation and the system of production. What they had to offer was trained minds and a capacity to master the facts—needed equally in handling peace-time problems. Housing, to scientists, is not a political headache; it is a problem, infinitely less difficult than the structure of the atom or the mechanisms of heredity. It is an equation with a lot of variables, but the variables are ascertainable. We need the scientists in Councils of State, in the Departments, and in the organisation (as well as the laboratories) of industry. But the men we need for such affairs are the very men whom Sir Henry Dale, rightly, wants to see back in their lecture-rooms and laboratories training new scientists and conducting fundamental research.

When Professor J. D. Bernal was awarded the Royal Medal by the Royal Society last week for his exceptional brilliance in crystallography, the citation, with a hint as broad as the praise, said: "Biochemistry, as well as the physics of his primary discipline, will expect much now from his resumption of personal participation and leadership in a field which he has made so much his own." But Bernal is still indispensably involved in Service commitments. He is also vitally concerned with housing, as chairman of the far-reaching scientific inquiries of the Ministry of Works and Buildings. He has many other tasks on the social aspects of science. He has his professorial duties at Birkbeck, and he has the development of his own research work now housed at the Davy-Faraday Laboratory.

Or consider Professor P. M. S. Blackett, member of the new Committee on Scientific Man-power and of the Atomic Energy Committee. The Government cannot dispense with his services either in public affairs or in his Service connections. Yet, as professor at Manchester University, he is trying to revive the Rutherford tradition there and attract the brilliant young minds to physics. Moreover, as a research worker, he is our leading expert on cosmic-rays; and, if the intensive work now going on in Russia under the direction of his old colleague of the Cavendish, Professor Peter Kapitza, is any indication, momentous developments are to be expected and demanded in that field.

The same considerations apply to Prof. Zuckerman, the biologist, who graduated through Civil Defence and Combined Operations to the councils of war and found himself at the right hand of Tedder, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, not as a biologist or as a "gadgeteer," but as a planner and problem-solver. He has his work to finish at the Air Ministry. He is heavily involved in peace-time problems. His chair awaits him at Birmingham. Another who played a leading part in securing the acceptance of science's social responsibilities, Prof. Hogben, is still in the Directorate of Biological Research at the War Office. These are only a few examples. Sir Henry Dale's quandary is personified in dozens of our other leading scientists. As individuals we can spare them neither from public affairs, nor from teaching, nor from research.

But the problem does not end with the leaders of science. The Scientific Civil Service is trying to engage scientists for essential Government research work, including the Atomic Research and Development Station to be established at Didcot. There will be recruitment for the important new Colonial University Service, which will properly demand really high-grade men and women from the scientific field. The Research Associations, in which the State and the various industries co-operate, are planning big expansions, in many cases doubling their efforts. Private industrial concerns are trying to increase laboratory work.

The Universities, still chary about expanding the science faculties lest they upset the academic balance between science and the humanities, will, by the very nature of things, have to increase their chairs, their teaching staffs generally and their research facilities. The up-grading of the Technical Colleges, which will have to produce the reinforcements of technologists, will put them "in the market" for high-quality science graduates. Our schools, with the new incentives and excitements of science to encourage the young, will be clamouring for science teachers.

The Government will have to move quickly. An interim report has been demanded of the new Committee. Recruiting for science must start at once. Release from the Services of qualified scientists becomes one of the urgencies of Class B demobilisation. There must be a lavish increase in science scholarships. There must be some scheme for both rehabilitating and subsidising those youngsters who were one-tracked by war-time specialisation, and are now grown men and women, in many cases with families to support. Endowment of research facilities, expansion of research premises and a new financial status for scientists generally must be among our priorities. Moreover, we cannot afford to allow the scientists to retreat again into their Ivory Towers. We need them in our public affairs. We need them in the Government itself. We need, not a Ministry of Science, but a Minister of State—someone (to quote Mr. Herbert Morrison) to tie-up scientific affairs within the Government, to watch over things and be helpful.

RITCHIE CALDER

BLOW OUR OWN TRUMPET

Look at that extreme Socialist intellectual weekly newspaper, whose name I have happily for the moment forgotten.—Mr. Churchill, November 28th, 1945.

WE, the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION,
Against oblivion and extinction claim
An endless lease of fame,
High warrant for perpetual circulation.
Not through keen aphorism,
Nor pleas for right and justice, bold and fiery,
Nor Critic's dædal Diary,
Nor Mortimer's undeviating line
Against the Philistine
Retrieved from Time's dark backward and abysm.

Not for our social thesis,
Corrective of political *dementia*
Among the intelligentsia,
Nor lucid economic exegesis,
Not for stylistic symmetry,
Nor Brailsford's incorruptible analysis
Of inter-racial fallacies,
But, starred by fate's benignant eccentricity
We leap to world publicity
Pinpointed in a haze of anonymity.

And since, through long successions of centenaries,
Contemporaries of yet unhatched events
Will weigh our arguments
In mines and *salons*, Parliaments and deaneries.
Alone of Fleet Street's perishing ephemeræ
By one back-handed testimonial prized,
Being immortalised,
We, clearly specified, albeit obliquely,
Announce ourselves the Weekly
The name of which has happily escaped Mr.
Churchill's memory.

SAGITTARIUS

A LONDON DIARY

I can't help being sorry for Mr. Ryan, who replies to me this week in his capacity as B.B.C. News Controller. I have been on friendly terms with him for many years, and do not like to see him placed in a false position. His long letter does not attempt to reply to my criticism, but deals irrelevantly with past controversies during the war, when B.B.C. news services worked in varying degree under Government directive. On another occasion I shall be happy to discuss the general issue of the status of the B.B.C.; I did not suggest Government control, but that when the Charter comes up for revision we ought to consider the system at work in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, where a commercial network competes with a Government-owned station—which is something quite different from a Government-controlled B.B.C. But all this is beside the immediate point. Unless Mr. Ryan has some explanation, which he has not so far divulged, the charge stands that the B.B.C. broadcast in a sensational report from Berlin a grossly exaggerated story which could serve no purpose but to exacerbate prejudice, while its conduct in failing to broadcast any correction when the full facts were at its disposal seems inexcusable. The charge, as Mr. Ryan knows, is all the more serious because on two former occasions the B.B.C. versions of similar incidents also turned out on inquiry to be not only harmful, but inaccurate. Of course all journalists, as he says, make mistakes, which should be honestly corrected. But for the B.B.C. to fail to carry a correction is far more serious than for a competitive newspaper to commit a similar fault. For the B.B.C. is a monopoly, which is believed by almost all foreigners to speak with the voice of the Government.

* * *

Here is another matter for Mr. Ryan's attention. After he had blessed General Franco last week-end, the Pope, according to Reuter, "received Mr. Birley, director of the Southern European Service of the B.B.C., and conferred his benediction upon the employees of the Italian, Spanish and Portuguese language sections." This announcement was posted on the notice board in Bush House; many read it with amusement, but those members of the service who are Protestants or Agnostics found this unsolicited Papal blessing embarrassing and impertinent. It was, of course, a coincidence that this ceremony in Rome followed so closely on the removal of the Spanish News and Talks Editors, who were largely responsible for the success of our Spanish broadcasts during the war, and whose anti-Franco views had never been concealed. Still, it is a nice piece of symbolism that a secular purge should be concluded by a pontifical blessing.

* * *

I learn from those who direct UNRRA that the stories we hear of the misuse of UNRRA supplies have almost always proved on inquiry to be baseless. The story of the Red Army in occupation is in many ways bad, but the story that it seizes UNRRA supplies seems unfounded. On one occasion some Russian troops were seen eating UNRRA canned meat; but this proved to have been legitimately supplied them in exchange for their own butcher's meat to overcome a difficulty of transport. In Greece, most of the troubles are caused by inflation, but if UNRRA goods are seen on sale, it usually means, not that anyone has stolen or hoarded, but that some individual is giving up some rations in exchange for something he wants more. In Yugoslavia the new breed of officials are frequently inefficient, but probably less corrupt than any hitherto known in Yugoslavia. A current allegation was that Tito used UNRRA tractors to make airfields; inquiry showed that the charge was made when not a single UNRRA tractor had reached Yugoslavia. Many of the tales are Belgrade tittle-tattle. When I was there recently, I heard that some of the most malicious gossip comes from a British N.C.O. who makes money for himself by selling NAAFI goods.

* * *

With the small space at their disposal, the daily papers can do no more than pick out a few of the more spectacular revelations of the Nuremberg trials. To the student of history the result is singularly aggravating. Here are many of the things we want to know about pre-war diplomacy and the plans of international Fascism, under German leadership. We are tantalised by bits and pieces. Clearly no time must be lost in producing the most important documents in pamphlet or book form. Perhaps indeed two publications are necessary; a pamphlet which summarises the evidence, and a big book which reproduces as many of the documents as possible.

* * *

Everyone who has gone to the North-West Highlands by car or train knows the lovely passes near Pitlochry which are to be the site of the Tummel Garry hydro-electric scheme. I can understand why people are worried about the possible damage to local amenities and I'm sure their agitation has done much to ensure care by the engineers responsible. But the issue doesn't really turn on beauy. The most forceful argument put forward in the recent debates in the Commons and Lords is that, instead of giving priority to the development of uneconomic, but socially desirable schemes for providing cheap electricity to the Highlands and Islands, the Hydro-Electric Board is more concerned with establishing a profitable station capable of bulk supply to the Central Electricity Board. The Tory opponents of the Tummel Garry scheme, however, should direct their fire not at the specific proposals for the Pitlochry area, but at the constitution with which the Hydro-Electric Board was endowed by a Tory majority in the House of Commons. Over a period of years it has to balance its accounts; this means that the cost of small-scale plans for remote districts must be borne out of the profits of larger stations. Being denied any State subsidy, the Board is obliged to construct three or four major plants if it is to pay its way, and some loss of amenity is inevitable. If we want to preserve certain areas of scenic beauty untouched, then the State must be prepared to pay the price for that preservation by subsidising the necessary but uneconomic electrification of the Highlands. If North-West Scotland is to offer any future to its remaining inhabitants, it is time people realised that crofters can't live on views alone. The real ground for criticism is the absence of a comprehensive scheme of economic rehabilitation.

* * *

I am glad that the Air Ministry dealt fully and fairly with the Jodhpur "incident" which first saw light in a letter which I reproduced in this column. John Strachey's statement in the House of Commons completely corroborated the sober account I had from my friend, and confirmed that, apart from the men's refusal to work, they behaved in a sensible and orderly fashion. The Air Ministry has officially admitted the mistake of calling out Indian troops, and has made a handsome withdrawal. Two points are worth noting. First, incidents of this sort would be less likely to occur if fuller explanations of Government policy were promptly given to men in the Services. Second, the fact that Hindu custom makes it impossible to supply beef to certain British units and that other food has to be flown in, illustrates the type of administrative difficulty that, in justice to itself, the Air Ministry should publicise.

* * *

I met Mr. Gubbins in a Fleet Street fog.
"Nice day, isn't it?" I said.
"Isn't it?"
"It's not raining, anyway."
"No."
"I always think it's so much healthier when it's dry."
"Quite."
"But you can't call it really fine, can you?"
"No."
"I always read your column."
"Do you?"
"I don't always agree with it."
"No."
"But it's always interesting. It makes me laugh."
"Yes."
"You seem to have plenty of room for this kind of thing."
"Yes."
"My space is more restricted."
"Is it?"
"Well, I must be getting back to my office now."
"Yes."
"If I can find the way."
"If."

Critic

BOOM TOWN AT CHURCH HOUSE

The seemly decorum of the "House of Lords" room, where a Sub-Committee is choosing a site for the United Nations, was quite upset. Trails of insulating cable swung from Kleig lights. Marines in peacetime uniform carried in chairs. The cinema operator in the little gallery whirred his machine as the queue filed in. Here were the representatives of eight American cities.

My own favourites, I observed sadly, were absent. Among the suggested sites my choice was Navy Island, in Niagara Falls, or the Island of Oahu in Hawaii; if, as seems to be the idea in having an American site, the United Nations should be as inaccessible as possible, why not mid-Pacific? Or, seriously, Monticello, in Virginia, where Jefferson built the beautiful house he designed—if you believe, as I do, in the civilising influence of good architecture.

However, here came Atlantic City. Advantage, the airport. Then Black Hills, lying at the junction of Wyoming, South Dakota, and Nebraska. A hundred square miles of land, absolutely independent and tax-free. Timber houses—that sounded nice; limestone water—awful. The brochure showed an illustration of a peak carved into gigantic statues of Washington, Franklin and the Founding Fathers; they were considered an attraction, if you can credit it. Mr. Bellamy had a scheme for rendering the United Nations self-supporting. Five million tourists would visit the site yearly. The American tourist "tends to buy something wherever he goes." (Don't we know it in Europe!) If each of the Nations set up a store selling some article of merchandise, as tea in the Chinese store, scent in the French, and—we did not catch the word, but was it whisky?—in the British, the whole expenses of the United Nations would be paid out of the profits.

Mr. Bellamy told us that we could buy a dinner for a dollar twenty-five with a beefsteak six inches thick that "You could put your finger through." All the Americans dwelt fondly on food; they seemed to be feeling rather starved in London. Indeed they all had the common trait of looking well fed. Some were thin, but it was merely the difference between men who eat a great deal of good food which agrees with them, and men who eat a great deal of good food which disagrees.

Boston was spoken for by Governor Tobin, backed by a collection of celebrities. All were grave, dignified, genteel personages; Boston may be as cosmopolitan as they said, but we were to understand that it was aristocratically ruled. Of course, a strong candidate; on merits, the strongest, I thought. Of the other New England candidates, Newport, Rhode Island, was romantically sponsored by Major Stonor, an English descendant of one of its founders. A lovely situation on the island; and as he observed gently, offered by a body of people of wealth and position who had no interest in making money out of the United Nations—but too small-town probably, I thought. Philadelphia, on the other hand, too big and industrial. Judge Oliver, however, never mentioned the word "Foundry." He dwelt instead on the Quaker tradition of tolerance and international relief of distress; on the real current of belief in the United Nations stirring in the city; on the beauty of the offered site on the river-bank among woods. He was really moving, and palpably sincere.

The Chicago delegation was to my eyes pure comedy. They were so obviously entranced with Chicago. Its industry! Its stores! Its University, where, as they implied, research on the Atom Bomb should allure peacemakers! And what could be more romantic, as the eager little city attorney said, than the site—an artificial island created in Lake Michigan to house an exhibition and since left unbuilt on? The movie showed why, clearly enough; a horrible cement slab close to the inferno of the Loop. The movie ended with a series of the Neon-twinkling signs of night-clubs and a ballet on ice of lovelies strip-teasing with ostrich-feather fans.

Denver had its claims: about the right size; in wonderful mountain country, and cool enough to be a working climate even in summer. But San Francisco was sure that it would Find the Thimble in this competition. Mayor Lapham has already tamed many delegates with marvellous food, and lavish hospitality. Of course, it is one of the world's finest situations, and a good climate, too. "A little high fog in summer, but that is cooling," said the Mayor, who had been animadverting unkindly on ships frozen-up in New England harbours. Even remoter from Washington and the pestilence of the lobbyist than Denver. It is also as remote from all capitals as any place on earth.

But in any case the United States is the wrong country. It swamped the United Nations even at San Francisco. Every conference held there since Hot Springs has been in some way ruined by the American press; I do not speak of the team of American foreign correspondents, but when things happen in the States they are lost in the squallings of the domestic columnists. Political pressures are too heavy in any great State, and the unsuitability of the United States is only less great than that of Russia. Again, the severity of the American climate—save for some regions like the Pacific coast, which are really absurdly remote from the capital cities of the world—is a serious defect. The most intensive work of the international body must always be done in August; nearly all American towns are intolerably exhausting then.

The right place, from the point of view of world government, is in a small State and in democratic Europe. In flying-hours the Atlantic seaboard is nearer than New York to the South American capitals. It has a reasonable climate. It is cheap, and hotel bills can be settled without dollars. It offers freedom to the skilled press, with little interference from local press and politics. It is accessible to ordinary people, who matter far more, in forming public opinion, than do the newspapers. The Americans can, and do, visit Europe as part of their education. People from Britain cannot afford to go to America, except the negligible rich; still less people from other countries. The witnesses of the United Nations, apart from Americans and Canadians, would be exclusively the official delegation and newspapermen.

Switzerland still remains far the best country for the purpose. And since Russia and China are unwilling to consider Geneva, it might well be another Swiss town. Or if not Switzerland, Copenhagen, Brussels or Luxembourg. But I still think it should be Switzerland, which has by luck preserved her neutrality through two wars. And she has earned it by the Red Cross services which have saved countless lives and kept hope alive in innumerable breaking hearts. Why not make Switzerland the permanent, recognised Red Cross country of the world—inviolable, the land of the Truce of God?

FREDA WHITE

GERMAN UNIVERSITIES

WORKMEN were busy hammering away in the half-empty rooms of a house in the Theatrestrasse in Göttingen. Secretaries sat behind wooden tables; elderly men conferred in passages thronged by young men and women, mostly tall and sunburned, some of the boys and young men hobbling along on a wooden leg, or standing up with the precarious erectness of the armless. Many still wore parts of their uniform. There was a strange expectancy in the air, but hardly any conversation and no pushing. Silent queues and crowds, and silent tables in the nearby *Mensa*, the student's hostel where a simple meal can be bought for 60 pfennig. On the door of the Secretariat of the newly opened University of Göttingen there were many announcements to attract the newcomers. There were the proofs of the new syllabus of the University, and, in heavy type, warnings that the Faculties of Medicine, of Law, and so on, were closed to new applicants.

The paramount problem of these new universities in Germany is food, housing, lecture-rooms, and books. There is not enough of any of them for the numbers who want to study. The quota which the Control Commission has granted to Göttingen is 3,500 students, but two weeks before the beginning of the term there were 7,000 applicants. In Bonn there were more than double that number. This means that the larger part of those young men and women has to be sent away. Former members of the SS, SD, Gestapo, etc., are not accepted anyhow. Priority is given to disabled ex-Servicemen, war-widows and war-orphans, victims of Nazi persecution, and those students who will be able to pass their exam. in a relatively short time. Girl students are temporarily banned from the universities unless they can claim priority under one of the above categories. The result of this severe restriction on university studies is thousands of young men and women who wander from one university to another in order to find an opening—a potential intellectual proletariat whose future is unsettled and unsettling.

Even those who are accepted are only at the beginning of their problems. They are undernourished, with the exception of those who have spent the summer as farm-hands. Many have no money and no income. The "Werk-Student" has again become a common type. But there are no factories, few shops. So they try to find work in many odd ways: Some are employed by the Allies as mechanics or repair-men, as interpreters or office helpers. Some find pupils in the town or the surrounding villages. A workshop where students are trained as toy-makers, a laundry and similar small undertakings of a co-operative character help to bridge the gap. These young men who have spent practically their whole youth in the Army are eager to work and eager to learn. This, indeed, is one of the outstanding characteristics of this new generation—they are aware that they know nothing, that they are not able to master their own lives. They have a deep respect for technical and professional knowledge and skill, and they are keen to acquire it. It is a predominantly *factual* attitude, still far removed from the spiritual and intellectual hunger of former generations. In Bonn, out of the first bunch of applicants, 1,200 wanted to join the Medical Faculty, 12 the Faculty of Arts. Those who want to learn for learning's sake are a minority.

But, then, this is a European, not only a German problem. In this deep-rooted revulsion of this new students' generation against spiritual and intellectual fields the whole collapse of German thought finds its rumbling echo. Ideas and absolute values have collapsed in the eyes of this youth. Educationalists like Smend and Nole in Göttingen, and Spranger in Berlin, are deeply aware of this vacuum. "It is not the Nazi who is our problem. There are few of them left. It is the nihilist," one of the leaders of the Confessional Church said in Berlin. Indeed, these thousands do not believe in Hitler or the Nazi ideology, in Hitler's War or in any of his promises and vistas. But they do not and, at present, cannot believe in anything else either. Reality has disproved Hitler in their own experience irrefutably, or, as somebody in the Ruhr said, "Nazism was literally beaten out of most of them." But there remains the emptiness.

The Churches have tried to fill the gap. The Theological Faculties have sufficient students, the churches are crowded—also with young people. The Catholic and the Evangelical Youth Movements begin to re-emerge, and the courageous tradition of those pastors and priests who continued these movements illegally in the Third Reich is bearing fruit now. The comparative importance of this Christian Youth Movement and of Christian education is, however, somewhat smaller at the universities than at schools and amongst working-class, farming, and the lower-middle-class districts. A Christian revival is apparent amongst the younger people, but it is a fundamentally religious, not a political force, and it reaches only over a limited field of the population. At the universities the Political Parties have, so far, received no specific functions. Neither among the teachers nor among the students can a specific Party affiliation be observed. On the contrary, the university teachers who survived the Nazi regime without having been dragged into its orbit are predominantly un-political men. They are the men who have defended their particular field of study against the influx of Nazi ideas. Smend's writings and lectures during the past ten years, Jasper's philosophy, Spranger's teaching, von Beckerath's efforts in Bonn—all these are typical examples. Nor is it the opinion of the educationalist in Germany to-day that it would be wise to impose easy and superficial political ideas and organisations on German youth during the initial stage of its democratic evolution. The conditions for such an effort are as unpropitious as possible.

The economic and social need is paramount. The new Democracy is so far but a word. An authoritarian military regime prevails which cannot exert an educational influence on a youth which will believe nothing which it does not see and feel as a reality. Words, or even propaganda, have lost appeal; they only tend to increase suspicion. Democracy, so far, means in Germany only something negative, namely the disappearance of the Nazis. The convincing proof, namely the reality of democratic control and access to the free world, responsibility and self-determination are lacking. This perpetuates the existing political vacuum amongst young people. They cannot see either the shape or the structure of a new State—or a new society. The longing for a cause, for something genuine outside themselves, is very strong in many of these students. So far, many have found nothing but a crude and desperate realism and egotism which teach them to believe in professional qualifications and the apparent objectivity of personal experience—a dangerous fallacy.

Consequently the new leaders of the Universities—amongst them such outstanding personalities as Dr. Grimme, Prussian Minister of Education until 1933—are fully aware of the necessity of a genuinely democratic and free society as the paramount educational factor. No teaching of democracy will have any effect so long as the fundamental democratic rights are missing and all the paraphernalia of an authoritarian regime and complete seclusion from the outside world are the practical day-to-day experience. Clearly, the aftermath of the Third Reich is a heavy mortgage on this new educational effort. Consequently these new men and their students begin with what is there, with professional Students' Clubs and Associations, with a single-minded insistence on purely educational and scholarly improvements, with refresher-courses, debating societies concentrating on professional matters, and tutorial circles. Since neither the ideas nor the shape of the new democracy are yet apparent, there remains mainly science, and learning the democratic method in small ways. In those overcrowded, barely furnished rooms and " digs " in Berlin and Göttingen, amongst the ruins of Bonn and Hamburg, and in the ancient streets of Heidelberg and Marburg, small groups of young people begin to get used to frank discussions, to debating, to listening to the other fellow's point of view. They hardly realise that it is the wisdom of great characters and minds and the initiative of only a few freedom-loving men and women, that it is the living tradition of homes like those of Alfred Weber or Marianne Weber in Heidelberg, which is beginning to reassert itself in this way.

W. W. Schütz

TWO CONCERTS

Yehudi Menuhin.—When a virtuoso of the Menuhin class takes up a modern concerto in which he passionately believes, and insists on playing it everywhere, he performs the greatest possible service to the art of music. The public, which shows more respect for eminent performers than for eminent composers, concludes reluctantly that " there must be something in it," and listens with ears just that much wider open. Last week the Bartok *Violin Concerto* was given for the first time in London, but for the second time over the English air, by this matchless young executant. What do we make of it? " Easier " than most of the Quartets; fascinating, even exciting, to follow; clear too, and logical: if ever music knew where it is going, it is this. In the middle a set of variations of great eloquence; on either side allegros in which the usual rhythmic hammer-and-tongs alternates with stretches of apparently nostalgic sentiment. Violin writing masterly throughout; it will be long before we have exhausted the interest of the design. Whether, by then, the content will prove to possess the humanity and breadth of the greatest masters remains questionable.

Maurice Gendron, etc.—Petty muddles are becoming too frequent at the Wigmore Hall; whether management or concert-giver is to blame, the result is equally exasperating. At the Purcell concerts programmes and song-words were printed on different pieces of paper and sold—with considerable reluctance—at opposite corners by different attendants, who kept running out of supplies, so that the more pertinacious members of the audience could be seen reaching their seats in an unmusical muck-sweat, brandishing the double trophy as though it were a piece of the Westminster pancake. At last Sunday's French concert there were more ticket-holders than seats, more seats than programmes, and no words at all. This last was an inexcusable folly, since half the programme consisted of songs by Ravel and Poulenc, which were not remarkable for their purely musical charm, sung by Pierre Bernac, an exquisite artist with no outstanding sensuous beauty of tone. Ravel's *Histoires naturelles* have a few pretty moments, but seem to exist only as an elaborate framework for some modest musical jokes. Being delivered in a coy *parlando*, most of these got across; in Poulenc's new songs, however, the Guillaume Apollinaire and Colette words (which probably contained some amusing fantasies remained almost wholly impenetrable to the ordinary English listener. In the circumstances we could only concentrate on the musical substance, which seemed thinner than usual. Sour grapes? Perhaps. But I don't profess to be able to grasp a song without its words; and I think little of the judgment of those who do.

What made the concert memorable was the first appearance of an outstanding young French 'cellist named Maurice Gendron. With Benjamin Britten at the piano, he played the Debussy Sonata and the second of Fauré's two—an unfamiliar and lovely work. In Fauré M. Gendron's *cantilena* had the cleanness and certainty of an Ingres; in Debussy he showed equal mastery in what actors would call a " character " part—so much so, indeed, that the last movement of this supposedly difficult work had to be repeated. I look forward with lively interest to his performance of the new Prokofiev concerto next Sunday at the Stoll.

Desmond Shawe-Taylor

PUBLIC BENEFACTORS

In three rooms at the National Gallery we can enjoy a selection of the paintings and drawings acquired for the Nation by the National Arts Collection Fund and now exhibited in honour of the retiring Chairman, Sir Robert Witt. The public service performed by the subscribers to the Fund can hardly be exaggerated, for our museums have shockingly little money available for purchases. The extreme parsimony with which the Treasury treats them reflects the *laissez-faire* doctrines that have elsewhere been abandoned. (This is the more odd, because there was never any excuse for applying them to museums.) At long last some encouragement is being given to the Arts by the State through the Arts Council, but the necessity for a large increase in the grants to museums has become more than ever imperative. The State, through surtax and death-duties, continually redistributes individual incomes; and one consequence is the forced sale of inherited masterpieces. If the State does not show some generosity to the museums, it will strip this country of some of its chief treasures and thus deserve the curses of posterity.

The National Arts Collection Fund, though its subscribers remain inevitably too few to perform the duty so irrationally neglected by the State, makes the most valiant efforts. It was born in 1903, and Sir Robert Witt justly remarks: " Our early days, as is the way of infants, began with acute troubles and passed on to others more serious." The first purchase was a Venetian Madonna, a painting of no great merit and in very poor condition. Every visitor will find some later purchases that his individual taste disapproves. The famous Mabuse, for instance, seems to me showy and inexpensive; and I find in the Constable bought in 1941 for Ipswich a dullness of handling hardly paralleled in the so various works of this painter. But what marvels we owe to the generosity of the subscribers! The Wilton diptych, the Masaccio Madonna, the Piero di Cosimo and the Sassettas, the Vendramin Titian, the Tintoretto, the Rubens *Watering Place*, the Rokeby *Venus*, the two marvellous Rembrandts, the new Poussin (would that we could have its companion picture!) and *The Vale of Dedham*, to say nothing of the illuminated psalters and the Old Master drawings (and all the sculpture and works of applied art that are not represented in this exhibition). The pictures by later artists than Constable are mostly much less happily chosen.

I must venture one criticism of policy. Of the 113 exhibits only eleven have been given by the Fund to museums outside London (and four of these have gone to the Ashmolean). I agree that the supreme masterpieces such as those I have mentioned ought to be in London, because it is there that they find their largest public. But why not give most of the other pictures to the provincial museums, which sorely need enrichment? If a fairer proportion of the Fund's purchases were promised to provincial galleries, might it not obtain much more support from the burghers in the great centres of industry?

I have left myself space only for a postscript about the autumn exhibition of Old Masters at Agnew's. I lost my heart to the Tiepolo; to sketched heads by Rubens, which are miraculously alive; the early Rembrandt self-portrait is most curious; the Ruisdael is most noble; and the Strozzi with its wonderful colour deserves, unless it is very expensive, the attention of the National Arts Collection Fund.

Roger Marvell

THE SACRED FLAME

Mr. Maugham is capable of everything, and has a disturbing habit of leaving his audiences sure of nothing. Do you fancy him at home among the witty and wealthy who live in Residences near London or in the shop of a mystically-inclined barber's assistant? Mr. Maugham is the recorder of life, the detached and tolerant, though malicious, artist who presents fact with an austerity that conceals art, the gentleman with the cool wit and the heart of ice; yet *Sheppey* argues a moral standpoint. His is the comedy of manners, the drama of situation and brilliant craftsmanship; yet in *The Sacred Flame* (now at the St. Martin's) he allows the characters to discuss their feelings about love for three acts. The theme—the conflict of two notions of duty and Christian charity—is a high and dangerous one, and the characters are for the most part too well-bred to stand the strain of being the means of its expression; one is frequently visited by the uncomfortable feeling that one could hardly mention tortured, naked, triumphant souls in the drawing-room. Clearly the contrast between the restrained, unemotional family and the outrageously terrible situation into which they are jerked is consciously emphasised, but much of the self-sacrifice and noble sentiment has an unfortunate air of acute self-consciousness that is hard to play with conviction. Technically the play is a study in fact and neatness; verbally it can be dreadfully heavy.

Miss Sonia Dresdel clearly has personality and controlled intensity enough to play Nurse Wayland ten times over, but the part is not so rewarding as Hedda. She is never allowed a moment's respite during Acts II and III from alternating bursts of tears and vituperation, until lack of variety stifles the truth of the character. Miss Dresdel can convey frustrated passion with the very angle of her chin and with her walk, but Nurse Wayland has the misfortune of being made to seem a character compact of histrionics, greasepaint and bad taste beside the calm intelligence of Mrs. Tabret. Mr. Ian Lubbock plays the crippled pilot with courage and some charm. Miss Martlew, as his self-sacrificing wife, takes her part with seriousness but with very little range of gesture and facial expression, and meets the whole prolonged accusation of husband-murder with a worried air. Miss Hinton, as Mrs. Tabret, walks away with the play; she has the playable part, and makes the most of it. This Mrs. Tabret was both worldly and mystic with equal conviction, and Miss Hinton played her last act with a pathos and a natural grace that were a delight to watch. She has an elegance and an ease of manner that is the play's dearest need, and reduces the whole tangle of passion, poison and pregnancy to something approaching wisdom. The piece is sensational; but Mr. Maugham records life, and melodrama fits his scheme of things.

Siriol Hugh Jones

RADIO NOTES

Poetry. For those who, hardy or insomniac, can muster their full attention at the hours to which broadcast poetry has (one hopes, not finally) been relegated, Patric Dickinson always manages to provide stimulating or consolatory entertainment; even his errors of judgment are usually the result of worthwhile experiment. He flings his net commendably far, where kinds of poetry are concerned, but in his choice of speakers he keeps—in my opinion, rightly—to the professional. There will always be some listeners who, even after hearing, say, Cecil Trouncer read Browning's " Waring," still prefer to hear that poem fluffed through by the elderly diplomat or statesman who has made known his cult for it. Such people value, so they say, the superior " human " touch in the austere delivery. Whether they realise it or not, these are the people who would prefer an undergraduate performance of a Mozart opera to one given at Glyndebourne. In both cases the problem is one of communication—and to suggest a work of art by means of skilful improvisation is no more than a makeshift. Poetry is notoriously the most difficult form of radio, because it calls for terrific concentration on the part of the listener, who cannot go back over something he has failed to grasp; and here all the advantage is with the actor or actress whose training in clarity and variety of diction and timing minimise the occasions for misunderstanding. A broadcast poem should, I suggest, be every bit as much a *performance* as a concert rendering of Bach or Liszt. Danger for danger, it is sensible to risk an occasional spectacular number (I am thinking now of Marius Goring's execution of Shelley's " Ode to the West Wind," some weeks ago) rather than to hug the dull monotony and blundering ineptitude, varied by occasional felicities, of the " natural " reader. Without altogether sharing most listeners' detestation of female poetry-speakers, I must admit that the men have had the best of it lately. I recall a most distinguished and Faustian delivery of Prospero's great final speech by that unfailing star, Carleton Hobbs, a very successful performance of T. S. Eliot's dramatic monologue, *Prufrock*, by Cecil Trouncer, which made us feel how near this early poem really is in spirit to the *Four Quartets;* a revival of Calverley's humorous verses, which might well be repeated; and (last of all), Cecil Day-Lewis's discussion on that great sonnet sequence, Meredith's *Modern Love*, from which Valentine Dyall's rich, grave voice extracted all the dry, ironic tragedy. These things were memorable partly because they were unified in my own experience; the hotch-potch or mosaic is hopelessly confusing and simply goes in at one ear and out at the other.

Hedda Gabler. This was a most expert production, in which the mechanics of balance, tempo and perspective were so well managed as to be unnoticeable. Though he often suggests it, this is the only play in which Ibsen thoroughly explores the glaring desert of pure wickedness. The result is a glimpse of Hell, for it contains no hint of consolation. I applaud Miss Barbara Couper for so resolutely facing up to the very worst in human nature. The part of Hedda is one in which it is perhaps difficult wholly to fail, but the controlled violence of Miss Couper's performance was magnificently sinister. Hedda's personal appearance—the vivid, convulsive features, the avid eyes and vampire mouth—had somehow to be conveyed in the voice; and this, Miss Couper contrived most cleverly to do. Her tiny pauses—so far more eloquent in radio than in the theatre—gave us almost as much as her voice. It was unfortunate that the excellence of her performance should have shown up the rest of the cast in a poorish light. Gery Kenney, in particular, grotesquely overplayed the good-natured silliness of Tesman.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*December 9th.* Madrigals (2 p.m.); Concert (2.30 p.m.).

December 10th. Berlioz (every morning, 9.30 a.m.); "More Unusual Books" (Geoffrey Grigson, 6.30 p.m.).

December 11th. "The New Member" (6.30 p.m.); Talk, "Picasso and Matisse" (11.3.p.m.).

December 12th. Sibelius Concert (7 p.m.); "John Nash" (10 p.m.).

December 13th. Concert with Borgioli (3 p.m.).

December 14th. Discussion, "High Taxation" (7.30 p.m.); "From Tom Brown to Young Woodley" (8 p.m.); Poetry of Dylan Thomas, read by the author (11.30 p.m.).

December 15th. Sibelius Concert (Beecham, 3 p.m.); Week in Westminster (R. Boothby, M.P., 7.45 p.m.).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST.

THE MOVIES

"A Festival of Great Films," at the Scala

"Pink String and Sealing-Wax," at the Tivoli and The Marble Arch

"The Rake's Progress," at the Odeon

"Wonder Man," at the Leicester Square

To celebrate the cinema's fifty years a series of twelve programmes entitled *A Festival of Great Films* is being given fortnightly to members of the New London Film Society. The first of these included D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, which after thirty years returned to the Scala Theatre last Monday. The programme note asked us to pay respect to an early master; one's own early memories were being invited, too. And how did it go off? Very well, considering. We had an orchestra back in the pit performing the original score, and that at least triumphs through an era of honk and gabble. The film itself started off awkwardly with its captions and tableaux; then sprang to life nobly in panoramas of battle, a not unworthy counterpart to Whitman's *Drum-Taps*—Whitman, I think, would have embraced these scenes of heroism and carnage, and so also would have Hardy; then (after a ten-minute interval) politics and melodrama got the upper hand, but what a hand it was! The Black Empire threatened a handful of whites; Lynch the half-caste had the heroine almost within his grasp (once more round the locked room should settle it); the old people in the log-cabin had had their outer door smashed in; the Ku Klux Klan were speeding along immaculately like a Riviera express; faster and faster whizzed the shadow-play—"It must have been," I heard people exclaiming warmly as we stepped out into Charlotte Street, "a sensation at the time."

Enjoy it we did, but only by making allowances. Unless, for example, one agreed not to be amused by the young ladies' attitudes, there would have been a repeated intrusion of thin fun. I don't remember that Miss Lillian Gish or Miss Mae Marsh ever seemed ridiculous "at the time"; in fact, I distinctly remember falling in love with one of them. But manners, like fashions, change, and printed celluloid doesn't change with them. Hence there are large portions of the film from which emotion has receded, leaving only the out-of-date appearance, and this is the fault not so much of Griffith as of the film as a medium. Emotionally and æsthetically, it insists too much on particulars, it won't keep. For this reason and no other, a book by Conan Doyle or Rider Haggard will outlive a film by Griffith. I don't see why this fact should dismay enthusiasts of the film (it can boast an immediacy belonging to no other art), and especially I don't see why one should pretend matters are otherwise. Two things—apart from Griffith's obvious talent—struck me at this performance of an old world-shaker: first, how in three months and with a single camera, he had jumped to nearly all the devices of the modern film; then, the bond between us and these figures of 30 years ago created by silence—the one preservative (since discarded) against a killing literalness. Oh, the delight of *not* hearing the human voice!

Griffith's *Intolerance* will be shown on December 16, and at later dates *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Greed, Potemkin, The Loves of Jeanne Ney,* and *A Nous La Liberté.* I notice a vacant date in June. Suggestion: Flaherty's *Moana,* Lupu-Pick's *La Nuit de La Saint-Sylvestre.*

Two rather limp English films and a hard-working American one make up the week's entertainment. *Pink String and Sealing-Wax:* a pub and a dispensary in the Brighton of the Nineties provide the clash of atmospheres that leads to murder; good local colour, strong performance by Miss Googie Withers, but how slow! The playboy of *The Rake's Progress* is Mr. Rex Harrison, who after driving his wife to suicide and killing his father in a car accident, redeems everything by getting blown up in the war: lukewarm lament for the dud cheques and trusting women of the Thirties. *Wonder Man* is Danny Kaye again, a jumping cracker—if you like jumping crackers that go on for hours.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Skipper Next to God," at the Embassy Theatre

A new play by a promising young author needs to be treated with respect, especially if it happens to be the first play to be seen from liberated Europe. *Skipper Next to God* is fittingly devoted to the tragic theme of Europe's exiled and fugitive Jews, and treated with all the seriousness and godliness of the free Protestant Dutch. Moreover the author, who plays his own hero, is an actor of some force and dignity. To quote Miles Malleson's comment, "He has real quietness—a rare quality in our young actors." The first night audience was full of expectation and crammed with film producers on the watch. Yet they found themselves having to make too many allowances for comfort. Allowances for the winter colds and the wicked inconsiderateness of the coughing, which added to the confusion of certain somewhat under-rehearsed action sequences at the start—sequences shot off at such a pace and with so much noise that the audience was left completely bewildered. With the exception particularly of the Rabbi, whose harrowing gratitude was beautifully suggested by Abraham Sofaer, the playing of the many small parts was ineffective and badly timed. Further allowances—but perhaps there was a more radical mistiming latent in the construction of the play, which never seemed to develop its crises exactly where its author intended. The finish, when the Skipper gives his life to save his refugee cargo, was so badly off-beat that the audience was left foxed and confused once more. Nevertheless, the impressive sincerity of the play was as obvious as the fact that the production can and will be improved upon.

STEPHEN POTTER

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Mrs. Butterworth.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Summoned for keeping a dangerous dog, a Derby woman asked the magistrates to keep in mind "how many people it did not bite during its life."—*Sunday Express.*

Ex-Serviceman wants tattoo removed from arm. Urgent.—Advt. in *Manchester Evening News.*

His Majesty's Ship's Cats.—Applications are invited from lovers of animals who would provide good homes for one mother and five kittens; cat is of South African parentage; kittens, born November 23, are suspected of being Javanese (either Nationalist or otherwise); ship expects to arrive Chatham early January from the Far East, and delivery will be made if possible; there is no fee. Letters should be addressed to Commanding Officer, H.M.S. *Awe*, care of Fleet Mail Office, Chatham, and marked in the left-hand top corner "Tib-Tabs."—Advt. in *The Times.*

The invasion of Normandy began at 1 a.m. on June 6 last year. In military phraseology this is written 6.6.01 hours. This is 1066 in reverse.—Letter in *Sunday Times.*

Mrs. Sykes received a telegram from Peter Zander which read, "Be bold and resolute."

Mrs. Sykes and Mrs. Zander agreed that Peter must have meant "Be bloody, bold, and resolute," and Mrs. Zander tells me that this is now confirmed by a letter. The Post Office, not Peter, censored Shakespeare.—*Welwyn Times.*

Correspondence

B.B.C. POLICY

SIR,—"Critic" attacks the B.B.C. with the gravest charge that can be levelled against the good faith of a News Service. He states that on two recent occasions we broadcast untrue stories and refused to correct them because the truth did not square with our "news policy." The facts about these two stories are very far from being as "Critic" puts them and I might fairly ask you to let me join battle with him on these particular cases. But the general issue raised is more important than detailed argument about this or that story. If your readers are led to believe that B.B.C. news is edited on any other policy than that of chronicling without bias what of sober importance and reasonable human interest has happened in the world, then they should certainly clamour for reform.

Many people have believed and do believe that our news is edited with a bias. When the Spanish Civil War was being fought, a campaign in Parliament and in the press accused us of being anti-Franco Reds. Between Munich and the fall of Prague an equally angry campaign was waged against us as warmongers. I remember a militant appeaser saying to me quite sincerely, "What I can't understand is why you fellows at the B.B.C. *want* another war." I tried and failed to persuade him that because things happened and we reported them it did not follow that we had wished them to happen. While the Coalition Government was in office the most persistent charge against us was that we were pink and that we gave biased prominence to people, and events that "nobody except a handful of Bolshie intellectuals wants to hear about." "Critic" puts us on the spot for being "anti-Russian" and it is said elsewhere that we are "Right." (Echoes of our old crimes, are, however, still heard. A speaker at the Conservative Conference the other day made our wartime broadcasts considerably responsible for the results of the last election.)

The one constant factor in all this is the increasing readiness of people of all sorts of opposed views to assume that every item of news is edited with a motive beyond and outside an attempt to report the facts. This is a very dangerous growth of scepticism. All news editing, whether it is done by the B.B.C. or by any paper that ever was or ever will be published, involves from time to time mistakes of fact and of judgment. You will, I am sure, agree as an honest journalist that nobody can look back over his files without on occasion wishing he had put things differently. But to state this platitude is poles apart from assuming that everything you read or hear and do not like has got out for some deliberate, tendentious reason.

The problem of accurate reporting would remain unchanged if, as "Critic" advocates, B.B.C. News were Government-controlled. The last time, you went for us because you thought we were working to a directive issued by the then Prime Minister of which you disapproved. The B.B.C. has not and never has had—at least as far back as my experience goes—any "policy" except to report what has happened. All these rumours of "directives" and "angles" and orders from on high—from the Director-General or the Board of Governors or the Minister of Information or No. 10—issued to prevent listeners getting the truth unless it is palatable to authority, are pure moonshine. And, I venture to add, charges against B.B.C. officials of letting their own opinions colour the news are a monstrous reflection on professional honesty. I am, of course, prejudiced here, but it seems to me you might just as well accuse a Conservative or a Labour surgeon of botching for political motives an operation on Mr. Attlee or Mr. Churchill.

I suggest that the crux of the matter is this: Whenever people hear news disagreeable to them they are liable to blame the B.B.C. for having reported it. If any section of them had their way, then we should work in one field under a vicious censorship. If all sections of them had their way, then a coach and four of censorship would have been driven through the bulletins.

A. P. RYAN,
B.B.C. Controller (News).

[Critic refers to this interesting, but largely irrelevant, letter in the London Diary.—Ed. *N. S. & N.*]

BRITAIN'S PEACE-TIME ARMY

SIR,—T. Atkin's letter, excellent in the field it covers, has one important omission. He writes: "the only qualifications (for a commission) should be military efficiency, not accidents of birth and schooling." He should have added, "or the possession of the 'right' idea."

I write this feelingly, as a Serviceman who has, for more than two long years, been the victim of the ideological persecution which is waged by M.I.5 against soldiers who have Communist, Socialist or progressive opinions generally. My "crime" was active political work before my call-up.

Though endorsed by the Personnel Selection Officer, on entry into the Army, as "potential officer material," I have never been allowed even to appear before a War Office Selection Board for a commission. And when, after weary months of form-filling and interviews, I finally managed to get posted as Russian interpreter to the Control Commission of Germany (British Element)—I am a Cambridge University Graduate in Modern Languages (French, German and Russian)—I found myself, after only a fortnight in Germany, haled back to England by plane and sent to a Holding Battalion in order to be posted overseas (the farther off the better) as a clerk.

All attempts to get an explanation for this summary treatment have, of course, proved completely unavailing. Section 43 of the Army Act lays down the procedure for the passing on of complaints through Army channels; but in my case it was not allowed to operate.

Nor is my treatment unique. Indeed, several other interpreters suffered my fate. Had I been an ex-Tsarist officer, or a Sovietophobe, or even an anti-Semite, like some of my colleagues, all would have been well.

Wherever I go in the Army, my M.I.5 "black record" follows me. The Army authorities seem determined neither to use my skilled services nor to release me in order that I can use them elsewhere. In fact, I am a political prisoner in khaki, condemned to clean lavatories, or wash up dishes, or stick labels on envelopes, or such similar jobs as my superiors require.

One of my friends had the good fortune to meet with a well-disposed C.O. who actually showed him the secret M.I.5 document which tagged him around. I have not so far managed to get a glimpse of my own. But maybe M.I.5 will present it to me as a souvenir when my term of imprisonment is finally over.

Seriously, this is one of the most urgent reforms the Labour Government should carry out. Let them investigate the activities of the Blimp Gestapo, and meanwhile ensure that any man who is discriminated against is given the right to know the grounds and to defend himself.

M. I. FIVED

OBSTRUCTION?

SIR,—I am writing to bring to your attention an infringement of civil liberties which, although a small case in itself, has important implications.

On Sunday, November 4th, five men and women who were selling papers outside Hyde Park were arrested by the police for obstruction of the footpath. They were selling on the edge of the pavement and in the gutter, near the West Gate of the Park. The periodicals they were selling were *Peace News*, *Forward*, *Freedom*, and other anti-Fascist literature.

The five men and women arrested were brought before a magistrate, and on November 19th were found guilty of obstruction. One of the defendants, the well-known Italian anti-Fascist Adolfo Caltabiano, was sentenced to 40*s.* fine or one month's imprisonment, which he chose to serve. The other four defendants were bound over for six months. The magistrate in passing sentence stressed that he was not concerned with the nature of the literature sold, but merely with the fact of obstruction.

These sentences seem to be a clear attack on the "freedom of Hyde Park," a freedom which was fought for and won in the last century. The charge of obstruction is one that, if it can be made against these defendants, can be made equally against every newsvendor in the country. It seems, therefore, that the arrests were made because of the nature of the literature being sold; and although the police stated that they did not act on instructions, it was noticed that members of Scotland Yard's Special Branch were in Court.

Whatever the legal position regarding obstruction, the right to sell literature outside Hyde Park has been acknowledged for many years, and the arrest of the literature sellers is a piece of discrimination which might well be extended from those who sell literature outside the Park to those who speak inside it.

It is because of the possibility of further infringements of individual liberty of this kind, that we feel this case should be given the widest possible publicity.

HERBERT READ,
Freedom Defence Committee, Chairman
17 St. George Street, London, W.1.

CYCLO-TRACTORS

SIR,—"Critic's" note on cyclo-tractors and the disaster in Europe may give a dangerously wrong impression that primarily what I am putting forward is a gadget. Primarily I am putting forward an economic analysis so simple that it has perhaps been overlooked, and, secondly, a policy founded thereon.

Man's productivity depends on the quality and supply of his tools and equipment. His most effective tools, *in terms of his own labour*, are coal, oil, hydro-electric energy and the engines in which these are used. His next most effective tools are those which directly convert his own muscle-power into useful work. The difference between the best of the latter

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JONATHAN CAPE

and the worst of the former is small. Without any tools or equipment, *i.e.*, with his bare strength and hands, man's productivity is negligible.

In war not only reserves but the aggregate amount of equipment enabling muscle-power to be used is reduced: the more efficient types often suffering most. For this reason, when his most productive equipment, coal, oil and his engines are destroyed or dislocated, there are no supplies whatever of muscle-using equipment available for those who have hitherto been enabled to produce by virtue of coal and oil, etc. Their productivity is at once reduced from the highest to the lowest, *i.e.*, to that of their bare hands, and will remain at about this level until one or other of the two above types of equipment is supplied to them.

Unless a basic flaw can be found in the above simple analysis—perhaps your readers can do so—Mr. Bevin, I submit, should secure authority to *impose* on the appropriate Departments a policy of producing at once as part of a wider investigation, sketches and production plans, in every possible field, for such equipment as may enable the vast amount of muscle-power now unused, used without equipment or used with equipment of negligible productivity to function at near its maximum productivity, until such time as increased supplies of coal and engines provide more productive use for such labour in the tending of coal-driven machines.

The field is vast and varied. As *one* solution of the problem which I have posed I tentatively suggested in the case of haulage the use of what might be termed "cyclo-tractors." Agriculture is also of vital importance, though of greater difficulty. Here, too, I suspect the cyclo-mechanism—leg being stronger than arm muscles and the rotary crank the most economic way of using them—may prove the right line.

Many thousands of lives, I should say, could be saved by the production of a saw, actuated by mobile and group cyclo-mechanism, for wood cutting.

It is up to M.P.s and others to see that failure to go forward with this plan is justified not *ex cathedra*, but by the detailed reasons. For in the modern world it is as important that technical assessment should be seen and known to be done correctly as that criminal justice should be seen and known to be done.

GEOFFREY PYKE

THE SHOOTING IN CALCUTTA

SIR,—You state as fact, not even as report, that "The students, by way of demonstrating passively against it (*viz.*, the trial of three Indian Army officers accused of treason with murder and torture of compatriots under Japanese auspices) lay down in the street, *whereupon* the police opened fire: over twenty were killed and more than seventy wounded."

You will admit no doubt that this story, if true, is of a more serious incident than that of the jocular Russian officer: if incorrect, extremely mischievous, especially amongst your readers in Russia and America. I for one knowing something of the police and conditions in Calcutta, doubt it. It is up to you now to verify that the police fired on a *passive*, even supine, crowd of students; that they did so just to get traffic moving; that this particular firing cost the total results alleged; and that the persons killed and injured were all, or even mostly, students. On the face of it, the story is wildly improbable and bears all the marks of a mere canard.

H. QUINTON

[The incident is described by the *News Chronicle's* Own Correspondent in its issue of November 22. "A students' procession was stopped by police, whereupon thousands squatted in the road, stopping all traffic. Two hours later another procession appeared—the police cordon was broken and the crowd threw brickbats at the police, who when they found themselves in serious difficulty, opened fire . . . but the students continued to squat in the road." The casualties were then stated to be two killed and 75 injured. Later telegrams in the issues of 23rd and 24th report the number of killed first as 12 more, and then as 20. The former telegram speaks only of students, and we took it to mean that it was they who suffered these casualties. This was borne out by the Governor's statement (*Times*, November 23) that "the demonstrators" were a "leaderless body of youths, who disobeyed regulations" with the result that "traffic had been brought to a standstill for 12 hours, and casualties had been suffered." Our summary was incomplete in so far as we failed to mention that the police were provoked by brickbats, thrown not by students, but by bystanders. Lathi charges, but not, so far as we know, shooting by police on squatting crowds, occurred more than once in Bombay during the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930. It should be added that the total civilian casualties in Calcutta were nearly 300. (*Times*, November 24.)—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

FORESTRY

SIR,—The author of your article on "Britain's Forests" wrote in his original article this quite unqualified statement: "Poor land under trees employs—and employs economically—up to 40 men per 1,000 acres, which is far more than poor land under sheep." I then pointed out that on the Forestry Commission's Hardknott estate employment had so far been at about one-sixth of this rate. Your contributor now shifts his ground and says that his original statement, which was in fact made as a quite unqualified statement, is true enough when the trees are mature—that is in, say, 40 years or more. After standing squarely on two feet, he now balances precariously on one.

Admittedly the later employment, when timber is mature, is greater, as it is in the year of planting; but I am afraid that enlarged figures have dogged this Hardknott estate throughout. For when the Forestry Commissioners first bought the land, they said it would employ 35 to 40 men *throughout the first ten years*, which means about 25 or so for the Duddon part of the estate taken by itself. This is an enlargement of fact by four, instead of by six. Certainly any conifers, including Sitka spruce, can be fine, when they are grown *as specimen trees*, but these Duddon trees are being grown as pit props for profit, to be realised as soon as possible. So, as concerns beauty, the question is—which is the more beautiful, spruce planted in phalanx for profit or the previously visible crags and colour of the fellside? "The beauty residing in the eye" of this beholder votes for the colour and broken contours and the crags.

Friends of the Lake District, H. H. SYMONDS
Pennington House,
near Ulverston.

AUSTRIAN ANTHEM

SIR,—Your Editorial Comment on the Austrian elections (NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, December 1) states: "After announcing the news, the B.B.C. tactlessly played the Emperor's hymn from Haydn's quartette, but it is a mistake to suppose that the peasants, good Catholics though they are, desire a Hapsburg restoration. All three parties stand for the Republic."

I should like to point out that this tune, although originally composed in honour of a Hapsburg Emperor, came to be the Austrian National Anthem as such. (It continued to be used after the First World War during the time of the Republic, though with different words from the original.) This is presumably the reason why it was played on the occasion in question.

No specifically *monarchist* stigma therefore attaches to it; any undesirable associations it may have lie in quite a different direction. Germany adopted the tune for *Deutschland über Alles* with which, unfortunately, most English people identify it.

38, Homefield Road, S. A. COOPER
Chiswick, W.

[The juxtaposition of the Emperor's hymn and the announcement of the election results was a coincidence, and our comment was uncalled for. The Haydn quartette was already scheduled to follow that particular news-bulletin in the Home Programme.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

N her charming and far too little known autoography, *Le Collier des Jours*, Judith Gautier escribes how one day, as a young girl, she looked ut of the window of her father's suburban house -it was a gloomy sunless afternoon during the te autumn or the early winter—and saw aproaching along the road (which incidentally ordered the grounds of a celebrated asylum here many distinguished lunatics had come to end their last months) a small and singular ocession consisting of a man and a dog. The og was a large, dejected mongrel, with a tail at dragged behind it. The man, a spare, andified figure, in a tubular frock coat of tightly ting black, was following the dog on tiptoe, pparently determined to tread on the end of s tail. Suddenly he succeeded. The dog rned on its pursuer with a yelp of rage or pain; d the man, losing his balance, toppled and ll backwards into a wayside ditch which brimmed ith yellow muddy water. Charles Baudelaire s visiting his old friend Théophile. . . .

It must have been about this period that udelaire was introduced to the brothers oncourt; and admirers of their Journal will collect that, although they have little to say out his work or conversation, they were unvourably impressed by his personal appearance d what they hit off in their smart, effective yle as his *toilette de guillotiné*. Baudelaire was ll best known as a satanic *poseur;* and many cades were to elapse before the legend had himself elaborated ceased to obscure the adiation of his true poetic genius. Only ring the present century, now that the influence the critics of the Nineties has gradually died ay, has it become possible to see Baudelaire his correct perspective. The element of self-rody and the streak of sensationalism (dubbed a modern French critic his "*satanisme à n marché*") appear less and less important; we ve learned to discount those occasional vulrities of expression—for example, the "divans ofonds comme des tombeaux"—over which e late George Moore used to hold up pale, ump hands in fastidious disapproval. There probably no single collection of verse pubhed during the nineteenth century that has od the test of time better than *Les Fleurs du al:* there is none to which we return more ten, which preserves a greater air of freshss, and offers more surprises, at each successive ploration. Baudelaire's verse, at its finest, mbines the delicacy and suppleness of French ith something of the brazen sonority of the eatest Latin poets. As Jules Laforgue pointed t, in his admirable notes on Baudelaire, printed ong the *Mélanges Posthumes*, he added a w and poignant tone to the orchestra of modern etry: "Il a trouvé le miaulement, le miauleent nocturne, singulier, langoureux, désespéré, aspéré, infiniment solitaire . . ." Yet how urageously he confronted some majestic mmonplace, how boldly he would employ me apparently humdrum phrase!

> Il a le premier trouvé (wrote Laforgue) après toutes les hardiesses de romantisme ces comparaisons crues, qui soudain dans l'harmonie d'une période mettent en passant le pied dans le plat. . . .

nd elsewhere Laforgue comments on:

> Cette noblesse immuable qui annoblit les vulgarités intéressantes, captivantes; cette façon de dire—et cela sans périphrase prude, poncive—cette familiarité de martyr entre les plus grands qui peut lui faire dire:
> "Les persiennes abris des secrètes luxures"
> et une page plus loin:
> "Andromaque, je pense à vous!"

Baudelaire, however, was not merely one of the ost original, eloquent and expressive of nineenth-century poets: he is also in the front nk of modern prose writers. He believed that true poet must necessarily be a critic: ". . . tous s grands poètes deviennent naturellement, fatalement, critiques. Je plains les poètes que guide le seul instinct; je les crois incomplets." A poet must discover the laws that govern his own activities, and must attempt to systematise the enjoyment that he derives from the work of others. "Je résolus" he explained at the beginning of his essay on Wagner, "de m'informer du pourquoi, et de transformer ma volupté en connaissance." Thus it came about that he left behind him, in addition to *Les Fleurs du Mal*, an assemblage of critical essays, unusually solid and well-argued yet lit up by constant flashes of imaginative insight. That he was sometimes misguided goes without saying. Obviously his cult of Poe was exaggerated, his championship of Wagner partisan. Not all the painters he admired have kept their interest. We prefer to-day to remember Fromentin as a novelist and author of splendid travel books: Baudelaire's description of a Boudin sunset has more literary charm than the original canvas (one suspects) possessed aesthetic value: he had a good word for Meissonier and was occasionally indulgent towards Ary Scheffer. Yet, when the reckoning is finally calculated (as was done two years ago by Miss Margaret Gilman, in a book, published by the Oxford University Press, entitled *Baudelaire the Critic*), he emerges with a formidable credit-balance of brilliant observations. His study of Constantin Guys, *Un Peintre de la Vie Moderne*, is surely one of the most astonishing feats of constructive criticism and imaginative interpretation that have ever been accomplished.

But then, the essays were not all. Besides his critical prose, he left to the world the papers that have since been published under the general title of *Journaux Intimes*, and are subdivided into *Fusées*, *Mon Cœur Mis à Nu* and *Choix de Maximes Consolantes sur l'Amour*. The second at least is a sketch for a full-length volume. "Ah, si jamais" he declared, "ce livre . . . voit le jour, 'Les Confessions,' de J.-J. Rousseau, paraîtront pâles." The sketch was never worked up, the outlines never filled in. Yet, even in their fragmentary state, the *Journaux Intimes*, particularly *Mon Cœur Mis à Nu*, rank high among modern attempts at critical self-dissection. They are a clue to the development of Baudelaire's mind—there can, of course, be no single clue to the evolution of his genius: at the same time they provide hints of immense importance to our understanding of his period, of the processes of decay and rebirth, of the phases of hope and hopeless disillusionment, from which sprang the bewildering fertility of nineteenth-century art and literature. They reveal a man who hates and fears life, and who hates and despises the conditions of modern society (who is oppressed by an "immense nausée d'affiches" and who wonders that an honest man can touch a newspaper without an instinctive movement of repulsion), yet is fascinated by the beauty that lies in squalor, the energy that he seems to distinguish flowering in evil: whose attitude towards the world and his fellow human beings is swayed by alternate impulses of rejection and acceptance. He has an invincible yearning for the life of the spirit, and opens *Fusées* with the affirmation: "Quand même Dieu n'existerait pas, la religion serait encore sainte et divine." But had Baudelaire been born the ascetic he often longed to be, had he never penetrated those labyrinths of sensual experience where he lost health and happiness and ordinary peace of mind, what his character gained in dignity his imagination would have forfeited in richness and variety. On the one hand, he is an impassioned puritan, with a puritan's distaste for Woman (whom he regards as the natural enemy of the saint or artist); on the other, he is a passionate observer of the contemporary social scene, enamoured of the "beauté de circonstance," "le beau multiforme et versicolore, qui se meut dans les spirales infinies de la vie," a beauty he finds in clothes and equipages, in "quelque chose d'ardent et de triste" he glimpses in the face of an unknown passer-by, in the tide of urban prostitution which, as dusk falls and the gas-jets flutter and rustle under the wind, begins to creep like an invading army along the crowded greasy pavements.

To gather and convey these impressions, and maintain all the while a delicate equipoise between equally violent impulses of love and hatred, demands of the poet-critic a very special training. The laborious and painful self-education that Baudelaire underwent is closely connected with his theory of the Dandy. In Baudelaire's scheme of things, the Dandy is no Brummell; for Brummell had his epicene side, and Baudelaire's Dandy is everything that Woman is not and, in his view, owing to her peculiar constitution, everything that Woman never can be:

> La femme (he enunciated in *Mon Cœur Mis à Nu*) est le contraire du Dandy. Donc elle doit faire horreur. . . . La femme est naturelle, c'est-à-dire abominable.

Here it may be as well to remind his feminist readers that Baudelaire's anti-feminism had, in the last resort, a strongly personal basis. He could not forget or forgive the wound inflicted on his youthful sensibility by his adored mother's re-marriage to the dashing General Aupick. Henceforward there existed in his mind an almost unbridgeable gulf between sensual and spiritual love: the women he loved spiritually (as he loved the mysterious "Marie" and that jovial and commonplace personage, Madame Sabatier) he found it difficult or impossible to approach physically: the earthly Venus was seductive but necessarily abject. The passage quoted, nevertheless, has also deeper references. Baudelaire's work, both as a poet and as a critic, is a continued protest against *nature*. In his mythology, as in that of William Blake (whose *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* would certainly have interested him), Nature is the villain. Virtue and beauty are the products of artifice. "Le mal se fait sans effort, naturellement, par fatalité; le bien est toujours le produit d'un art," and, in one of his critical essays, "C'est bête comme la nature," he remarks of a statue by David. True, he was frequently inconsistent. We recall the famous and exquisite sonnet in which he speaks of Nature as a temple up-borne on living pillars, as a "forest of symbols," full of strange meaning to the man who wanders through its avenues. But poets differ from philosophers inasmuch as they recognise that a conflict, even a confusion, of ideas, if accurately reflected and honestly reproduced, may be as revealing as a hard-and-fast system achieved by ruthless intellectual pruning. Thus Baudelaire abominates Woman, yet drifts into profound reveries suggested by his mistress's beauty, in one aspect spiritual, in another sensual and ephemeral; he reconciles (or, rather, does not attempt to reconcile) his detestation of Nature, and his avowed preference for landscapes where man predominates, with his devotion to the sea—"spectacle . . . infiniment et . . . éternellement agréable." Yes, he is inconsistent, variable, capricious. But the object of his notebook-jottings was to lay his heart bare, to chart its troubled and changing responses to the universe around him. Few writers have done so more thoroughly. We cannot pretend that Rousseau's *Confessions*, compared with *Mon Cœur Mis à Nu*, seem pallid and uninteresting. But we feel that they belong to a different world—to a world that came to an end with the Romantic movement. Where Romanticism ended, and the Romantic dream faded into the prosaic reality of mid-nineteenth-century Europe, it was Baudelaire's mission and fate to raise his intellectual standard.

PETER QUENNELL

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CORNERS OF THE WAR

The Monastery. By F. MAJDALANY. *Lane.* 7s. 6d.

Flat-Top. (The Story of an Escort Carrier.) By F. D. OMMANEY. *Longmans.* 3s. 6d.

Burmese Outpost. By ANTHONY IRWIN. *Collins.* 10s. 6d.

War Below Zero. (The Battle for Greenland.) By COLONEL BERNT BALCHEN, MAJOR COREY FORD and MAJOR OLIVER LA FORGE. *Allen and Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

It is my impression that the best books of this war—the personal narratives and the poems—will turn out to have been those written immediately after the event. For one thing, the soldier doesn't come back speechless to-day as he did in 1918; the ice has been broken again and again, and the reader isn't any more an enemy. Then, in writing as in films, the documentary has come into its own, creating new standards and giving a fresh impetus to realism. About war, especially, a large number of people have come to feel that it is æsthetically shocking, as well as morally wrong, to create illusions. The romantic liar on the one hand, and the horror addict on the other, seem to-day equally outmoded, and the result is a balance, a truthfulness, a gain in objectivity and insight that raise the personal narrative once more to the level of art. Books such as *The Monastery* not only astonish by their actuality, but make any novel, except the very best, seem badly written. Here, for once, the words don't depend for their effect on sentimental overtones.

The "Monastery," as you will see from the picture on the cover, is Cassino, Benedictine foundation of the sixth century. Last year it formed a hinge of the German line across Italy. It had been spared as a valuable monument; it had been bombed—the Germans still held on; it overhung, through the winter months, the lives and minds of all those whose business it was first to oppose and then capture it. The narrative is divided into four parts; taking over, holding on, a short relief period, and the final attack. The journey up had to be accomplished by stages, ending with two-days' climb on foot and at night. The difficulty in getting there, the glimpses of the Monastery getting larger and larger, add an unreal menace to the scene. Not more unreal, however, than the battle itself. Snow, rain, mist, vermin, stone hovels, dysentery, shortage of food and water, mule transport, electric lighting in the mud, days of lying under cover, nights of bombardment—these were the conditions; and over all the Monastery. It looked down the throats of the attackers. It pinned every movement. It was bombed, blasted, dosed: expense no object. At times, in the moonlight or under green Vereys flopping "like dying birds," it looked extremely beautiful. It threatened not only physically, but mentally, for until the delayed attack there wasn't the least chance of its capture. "What's hatching in the Monastery?" was the dominant question; and the gunnery expert would work out new and troubling combinations of fire, a Vickers gun jammed among neighbouring rocks would be operated at intervals by a cord pulled from below. This "Ghost Gun" delighted its inventors out of all proportion to its usefulness. "How's the Ghost Gun?" a visiting brigadier would exclaim cheerfully, "good show!" Another toy in the game that killed or mutilated and brought a forty-year-old look to twenty-year-old faces. Jenkins (the fact is recorded on one page) died at twenty-to-five on his way to the latrine as they were shouting that tea was ready. A mortar bomb happened to fall at his feet, and afterwards everything was as quiet as it had been before. It is the chance, the isolated death, adds the author, that seems terrible, because it breaks open the routine and the play-acting without which no soldier could stand the strain. "You conquer the abnormal by treating it as if it were normal. That is the secret. You must never acknowledge that abnormality exists. Once you do the whole structure of morale is bound to collapse."

So they went on arranging surprises for the enemy, crouching under a rock all day till the night should bring freedom, reading news in the papers, making sorties, gassing about girls and Naples, drinking tea, getting killed. Mr. Majdalany—he doesn't tell us his rank, but one places him between lieutenant and major—gives a picture of battle, of the individuals taking part in it, that is as vivid and complete as any I have read. If he had waited ten years before writing, *The Monastery* would have been a different and, I believe, a far less valuable record of experience.

Flat-Top is a sketch of life on an escort carrier, done in the orthodox documentary fashion; description of the carrier, snatches of talk, monotony, attacks by Jap bombers and a U-boat. The most moving passages describe taking-off and landing. Pleasantly written, but the smashed U-boat slipping backwards "into the boiling *unregarding* sea," betrays the incongruity of literary habit. The author of *Burmese Outpost* is more of an egotist, begins "I have often been asked . . .," and then finds the front he likes best, guerrilla-fighting in the jungle. His account of Arakan in 1944 and of the Jap as a fighting man is well worth reading, and this is the kind of warfare that teems with illness and adventure. Mr. Irwin reveals himself as an awkward and bitter, but not uninteresting, personality.

The war is almost secondary in *War Below Zero* to hazards of geography and climate. "You step outdoors and your rubber-lined trench coat freezes stiff as a board before you can shut the door." The east coast of Greenland presents extreme cold, semi-darkness, mountains and fog, crevasses, switchback winds to the pilot in war or peace. The object of the 1941 expedition from America was to establish a northern air base and destroy a Nazi wireless station. This, despite appalling natural difficulties, was achieved; and in one instance captor and captured then set out on a 300-mile journey, sharing the same sleeping bag. *War Below Zero* belongs properly to the annals of exploration, and in the battle against nature important victories were gained. The transatlantic air route between Newfoundland and Prestwick has Greenland for its halfway house.

G. W. STONIER

ECCENTRIC VICTORIANS

Curious Relations. By WILLIAM D'ARFEY. Edited by William Plomer. *Cape.* 8s. 6d.

William d'Arfey is a pseudonym, and the names of the persons he describes in these memoirs have also been altered. Doubtless this was necessary to spare the feelings of their surviving relations; but as a result the reader may suppose the book to be a pastiche similar to those produced by Mr. Vulliamy with punctual skill. Neither Mr. Plomer in his introduction nor the publisher in his blurb has managed to make this misconception impossible. While the memoirs are authentic, they cannot be described also as true. In his efforts to "make a good story" of a story that was already good, the author embroidered with more gusto than tact. (Do we not all know raconteurs who thus forget that "le mieux est l'ennemi du bien"?) And as a result sometimes an incident that would have been delightful is made incredible, not to say tedious.

This reservation made, I can recommend the book as hugely entertaining. The characters, most of them relations of the author, Victorians and Edwardians, are as eccentric as the minor personages in Dickens. It would be easy to moralise—the author does so with rare detachment—about the decadence of a class as exhibited in these fantastic specimens. Wealth and idleness sunned and manured them so that they took the distorted picturesqueness of Japanese dwarf-trees. Alternately they may be compared to Pekinese dogs, useless and pampered indeed, but victims of a cruel artifice that burdens them with bow-legs and asthmatic breath. For these human parasit
were most of them unhappy; it takes uncommo
vitality or intelligence to enjoy a life of idlenes
But such considerations are afterthoughts. Read
ing the book, one is content to gloat over th
Rowlandsonian comicality of the characters an
episodes.

> My grandmother was proud of her slender figur
> and did everything in her power to prevent it bein
> spoiled by childbirth. . . . In those days there we
> no reliable methods of contraception, and so, whe
> her pregnancy had reached a suitable stage, sh
> would summon the entire staff, butler, footma
> housemaids, cook and buttons, and these, arme
> with cushions and soft eiderdowns, would b
> stationed at strategic points at the foot of the stai
> case. She would then fling herself, like Sapph
> from her Leucadian crag, from the top of the lo
> first flight into a general mêlée of willing arms
> the bottom. She never broke a limb or contracte
> peritonitis, and she never failed to bring about
> miscarriage.

This is one of many stories in the book that wi
surprise the innocent reader who judges Victoria
life by the novels of Miss Yonge. "My father
first wife" excites, by her incomparable obesit
frenzied admiration in Tangier (this tale would b
slightly more plausible, I fancy, if located i
Turkey); a cook rushes naked into the dinin
room (I may add that when the wife of a Dubli
surgeon indulged in the same gesture Geor
Moore, who was a guest, called for an encore an
was ejected by his indignant host); Cousi
Honoria makes her hats of brown paper, adornin
them with lichen, crab-shells and dead birds
Mrs. Templeton-Lemonnier, the wife of a peer
son, lives simultaneously with three other me
one of them her father-in-law, and having th
produced an heir, retires to solace herself with
female friend. It is all most unedifying and a
funny as Evelyn Waugh. The characterisatio
is neat, the period detail nicely selected. Mr
Plomer explains that his friend the author di
leaving only a first draft of the memoirs "roug
fragmentary and episodic, which needed, at th
very least, much cutting and polishing." Th
pious task has been beautifully carried throug
and the book is so easy to read that you end
far too quickly. What is more, I think that i
ten years' time it will be fun to read it again.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

DISTRICT OFFICER

Vouza and the Solomon Islands. By HECTO MACQUARRIE. *Gollancz.* 9s.

"Sweating Jungles . . . Lush Palms . . . Fuzzy
headed Cannibals." These are cancelled by
diagonal line. "The people of the Solomons a
ordinary people—like you and me." Suc
pleadings on the saffron and purple dust cov
seem designed to keep the sensitive reader fro
what is, in fact, an intelligent and fascinatin
book. The theme is the personal side of adminis
tration in the Solomon Islands; the author is
Government officer who, through too much sym
pathy with the viewpoint of natives caught mid
way between new and ancient modes of life an
thought, fails to follow his own tribal pattern-
the inexorable code evolved by years of Britis
officialdom. Such a man is always doomed, bu
what are we to make of this author? He is not
crank; he grinds no political axe. A list of hi
previous books suggests that he is an extravert-
a man of action; this impression is strengthene
by his curiously elliptical manner of writin
assuming so much of the reader's awareness
the scene and of the details of his particular stor
a "King Charles's head" which he makes con
scious endeavours to keep in the background.

The power of a District Officer in his region i
well-nigh absolute: to the native peoples he i
the "Government"; his praise and blame hav
a touching significance. "As a Deputy Commiss
ioner for the Western Pacific," writes Mr. Mac
Quarrie, "I went about with my court on m
back, like a hermit crab. In fact, I could hav
opened a court at any hour of the day or nigh
in the topmost fronds of a coconut palm, had

en affected by so quaint an impulse." But a igher Authority observes deviations from the oper allegiances ; and here the author's judgent in the case of two natives charged with e murder of an infant proves his undoing.

The facts of this case, however, form only the ologue and epilogue to a vivid series of chapters native manners and characters. As a *raconteur* e author is at his best : his accounts of the scinating Namu-Nora, whose origin he attempts trace to a lost French vessel of the last century ; a tribal dance in which he joins, thereby covering from an attack of malaria ; of the death d burial of a prisoner while Vouza is organising e laying of the prison floor with quick-drying ment ; of the initiation of the colourful Robin of a into the police ; all these are fine pieces of ory-telling.

Who is Vouza ? He is a native Lance-Corporal command of the Santa Cruz District Constabuy : he is also a right-minded Figaro, an Admirle Crichton and a willing Ariel in one. Loyal, bonair, dignified, ingenious, intensely alive, manners are often a reproach to those under om he serves. And there are other characters de three-dimensional and moving by this iter's easy pen. There is John Asa, " engineer d bo'sn," the only Solomon Islander known to e author to be acutely aware of his colour and disadvantages. " Given a chance with a ining," he observes, " John would have made first-class engineer, able to compete with any ite man." A facsimile of a letter written this sensitive, strong-willed young man to the thor at the time of his dismissal, deepens the pression of character and talent lying undeoped in these attractive peoples. And they e in Mr. MacQuarrie a chronicler at once pathetic and objective. The claim on the er may be an over statement ; some of the tives seem far from being " ordinary people e you and me " ; but if these are not all ouyhnhnms, the white men who come into the ry, by contrast mentally dull, physically unasing, spiritually ignoble, come perilously ar to being Yahoos. Yet the author seems capable of really disliking anybody. His mour is grounded on sympathy, not superiority, d the fidelity of his followers in his time of grace shows that such men as this District ficer, while they may tear holes in the frail oric of administration, are at the same time caple of replacing it by one more solid and enduring.

Naomi Lewis

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Showman Looks On. By C. B. Cochran. *Dent.* 18*s*.

Many persons under forty might answer, by means of Mr. Cochran's new book of memoirs, the question of what to give those over forty for Christmas. The author begins with stories of the magic 1870–80 Brighton of his childhood, and ends with an analysis of the English theatre of to-day. Between, there jostles an exceptionally diverse series of anecdotal portraits of theatrical and sporting celebrities, in London, Paris and New York. The casting back and forth in time, and a certain embarrassment of riches in the material, confuse, perhaps, a little. But even the confusion has its particular enjoyment. Among the illustrations are photographs from both productions of *The Miracle*, of Tree, Irving, Lucien Guitry, Beardsley, Otéro, Cavalieri, Cléo de Mérode, Dietrich, and Laurence Olivier, and there are two Lautrec reproductions from the author's collection, one being a sketch of Yvette Guilbert.

The capacity, or even the wish, to be an individual seems to become increasingly rare, as our rebarbarised century grinds out its destiny, and it may well come to pass that people (if there are any) will regard many of Mr. Cochran's characters as having been exemplars of reckless vanity. Nevertheless, most readers to-day will find their chiefest pleasure in the very power, and the separateness, of the personalities so casually, yet sharply, evoked. Pain will also be found, since the whole book testifies that whereas the generation depicted—like every generation—may have lacked the courage of its convictions, ours lacks the courage of its whims.

To quote from such fertile pages is too much of a temptation, and one passage shall be given if only for those who remember Little Tich, the most successful English comedian who ever went to Paris. He was a tiny man, with shoes like skis :

> Got up as a grand lady, in court dress with a long train, he hurled himself on to the stage of the Folies-Bergère.
>
> "*Je m'appelle Clarice,*" said Tich, with a chuckle which I recall when I hear Charlie M'Carthy. . . . " I'm an admiral's daughter—I've just come from the court ball—oh, my success !—what a *succès fou*—very nice ! "

Mr. Cochran includes a quantity of renowned *mots*, and among them is that matchless remark from *The Green Carnation*. Hichens makes one of his characters describe Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's Hamlet as " funny, without being vulgar."

As one reads, one realises again the enormous boon which the author has conferred upon the English theatre-going public during his lifetime. It was he who brought Duse and Bernhardt on their final visits, and he who suggested *The Miracle* to Reinhardt, and produced it, in 1911, at Olympia. This was probably the most significant event, as regards Spectacle, in modern theatrical history. He revived it, at the Lyceum, in 1932. He presented Chaliapin, and Lucien Guitry. Once, when Diaghilev could not find a London theatre, Mr. Cochran expanded the orchestra at the Prince's, and made possible that flashing season of *Cuadro Flamenco*, with scenery by Picasso.

I cannot list here even major triumphs of Mr. Cochran, but it must be added that English revue, in the inter-war period, was largely his personal creation. Few who watched those sumptuous, judicious, exhilarating displays at the old London Pavilion will have forgotten them. In theatrical decoration he gave Christopher Wood and Bérard their first commissions, and to him is due much of the early stage success of such brilliant designers as Messel, Beaton and the late Rex Whistler. A characteristic item in a Cochran revue was the ballet called *The Last Shoot* by Sir Osbert Sitwell. Music by Walton, choreography by Ashton, decor by Beaton. Could not such revues be staged again in London ? Will not Mr. Cochran, if only once more, show them how ?

Brian Howard

CHINESE TREASURY

A Harp with a Thousand Strings. Hsiao Ch'ien. *Pilot Press.* 21*s*.

Hsiao Ch'ien's idea in compiling this Anthology was to surprise us into a deeper understanding of China. He has succeeded in sketching a bird's-eye view of his country as seen through six centuries by people as subjective as Auden and Isherwood, by tourists as widely different as Marco Polo and Aldous Huxley, by writers who loved China as did Lowes Dickinson, and by Thomas de Quincey, who thought the Chinese " the vilest and silliest among nations."

A skilful selection of extracts from biographies and autobiographies lets us into the secret of how the Chinese see themselves. The women are the more interesting. Their evolution is portrayed in their changing attitude towards

ing out the old,
ing in the new

Christmas 1945 finds the world at peace. In our happiness, we must not forget those less fortunate than ourselves.

all parts of the world, our Service n and women will receive Christmas eer in Church Army Leave Hostels, ubs and Canteens. And at home the ely, the sick, the aged, the children, tressed gentlewomen and the very or will receive Church Army help . fuel, comforts and little extras . . . ich will gladden their hearts.

ill you, at this Season of Goodwill, p the Church Army all you can in Christmas efforts ?

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marriage. This is subtly traced in the lives of a Third Century wife who sank in the waters and died rather than obey her mother-in-law, an Eighteenth Century wife whose shy emotional awakening is described by her feminist husband and by a girl guerrilla of the 1927–8 crisis who shouts "down with love" and refuses a proposal written on bloodstained notepaper in the middle of a battle because the suitor was not a comrade. By the late 1930's Chinese women began to reconcile personal happiness and national service, and this emancipated outlook is shown in an extract from one of the most vivid of modern books on China —*Destination Chungking*, by Han Suying.

Proverbs and nursery rhymes and satirical stories illustrate the Chinese character and humour. How wise this proverb sounds to-day:

> All the universe is an inn; search not specially for a retreat of peace; all the people are your relatives; expect troubles from them.

And how typically gracious this one:

> A private garden should have a section of rustic wildness; if it merely dazzles by its sumptuousness, the vulgarity of it suffocates one's breath.

Hsiao Ch'ien has led us into all kinds of highways and byways of Chinese life. The reader can find out the most common butterflies, moths, and animals and imagine the design of a Chinese garden. And one of the most interesting sections is a beautifully illustrated article on Ancient Chinese Musical Instruments. Introductions to Chinese literature by Arthur Waley and to Chinese Art by Roger Fry and the reprinting of Eileen Power's brilliant description of Marco Polo are just a few more items in a Chinese "Weekend Book" compiled for those who want to understand more of the most artistic civilisation the world has ever known.

DOROTHY WOODMAN

THE ZIONIST'S CASE

The Zionist Movement. By ISRAEL COHEN. *Muller.* *12s. 6d.*

The future of the Jewish colonisation of Palestine, according to the policy of the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the demand for a further mass immigration of Jews into the country, with their political and humanitarian repercussions, have become one of the most difficult of contemporary problems. Mr. Cohen's comprehensive and carefully documented history of the Zionist movement appears, therefore, at an apposite moment. Mr. Cohen has had a long personal association with Zionism, but he writes judiciously, with no tendency to minimise difficulties or to ignore the strong disagreements that have existed among the Jewish leaders. That these disagreements continue was made clear at the recent Zionist Congress in London.

"The aim of Zionism," writes Mr. Cohen, "is to re-establish the Jews as a nation in Palestine." Its spiritual and political justification is the conviction that the Jews are fundamentally "different," never assimilated with the nations among whom they have lived for the two thousand years of the Dispersal, and never to be assimilated. Through the centuries, the return to Jerusalem, with the recovery of nationhood, has been the object of fervent Jewish prayers. Remembering Zion, they have wept by the waters of Babylon. They have been the eternal aliens, sometimes tolerated, more often disliked and persecuted. Mr. Cohen rightly stresses this undeniable fact. But it is also true that there has been a considerable Jewish minority that has found comfort and consideration by the waters of Babylon, and in his admirable little study of anti-Semitism, Jacques Maritain insists that the Jews exiled from Germany in the 'Thirties, wept not for the Jordan, but for their homes by the Rhine.

It was these "assimilationists," the successors of Moses Mendelssohn in Germany and men like Edmond de Rothschild in France and Claud Montefiore and Lucien Wolf in England, who opposed the agitation for "Jewry a nation," launched by the Viennese journalist, Theodor Herzl, with the publication of his *Der Judenstaat* in 1896. The political renaissance in Palestine of the Jews had been proposed by Napoleon for his Imperial purpose when he invaded Egypt, as it was supported by the British Government for its Imperial interests in 1917. It was advocated in the 19th century by such different Englishmen as the pious Lord Shaftesbury and the eccentric Laurence Oliphant, and by George Eliot and Disraeli in their novels. But it was the Russian pogroms in 1881 and the Dreyfus trial, with the general rising tide of anti-Semitism which convinced Herzl that a place of secure and permanent refuge must be found for his people.

Mr. Cohen describes Herzl as a tireless, practical politician. After he had failed to persuade or to bribe the Turkish government to permit the establishment of an autonomous Jewish community in Palestine, he was ready to accept Joseph Chamberlain's offer of a considerable settlement in East Africa. In this he was
supported by Israel Zangwill but bitterly oppo
by the East European Zionists for whom it
Palestine or nothing, and, before his death, He
agreed with them. It cannot be said t
Mr. Cohen has any convincing defence of
Zionists' continued Palestine or nothing deman

The necessities of the first World War gain
for the Jews the admission by the Allied Pow
of their right to a national home in Palesti
which the suffering of centuries had left unheede
Mr. Cohen quotes Lloyd George's specific sta
ment that, in return for the Balfour Declaratio
the Zionist leaders promised to "do their b
to rally Jewish sentiment and support througho
the world to the Allied cause" and his furth
admission that it was fully recognised that
Zionist objective was the creation of a predomi
antly Jewish state.

Mr. Cohen describes in detail the amazi
agricultural, industrial and cultural success of
Jewish colonisation. With Jewish enterpr
and enthusiasm it is beyond question that Pal
tine, small in area as it is, is economically capa
of providing refuge for a large proportion of
million and a half Jews now homeless and hopel
in Europe.

I have never thought that there is much fo
in the claim that the Jews have the right to se
in the country, because in Mr. Cohen's words,
"their uninterrupted connection with Palesti
for over three thousand years." The Jew
population has, for most of the time since
Dispersal, been of the scantiest and there
more to be said for the Arab claim that the coun
is theirs because it has been theirs for a thousa
years.

The Zionist claim has its more effecti
justification from the facts that the League
Nations backed the British assurance that,
Palestine, the Jews might live by right and not
sufferance, and that, with the inspiration of
assurance, Jewish zeal and enterprise have broug
industrial and agricultural prosperity into w
was a barren land.

The Zionists are fully justified in claiming t
they have vastly improved the economic circu
stances of the Palestinian fellaheen. They
inclined to ignore that nationalist sentiment,
largely responsible for the success of th
colonisation, is also the reason why the Ar
are determined to resist the creation of a p
dominantly Jewish state. And they are apparen
unable to realise that, in the horrible post-w
tangle, no British Government dare face alone t

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ALLIED BAKERIES

OUTPUT AND SALES MAINTAINED.

The tenth annual general meeting of Allied Bakeries, Limited, was held on 28th November in London.

Mr. S. Hodkinson, who presided, said that their trading subsidiaries had maintained their output and sales, but the continuance of the stringent restrictions on their raw materials and deliveries of their products had made any great progress impossible.

In the legal balance sheet, General Reserve account had been increased by the substantial sum of £75,000 to give a total of £[illegible]25,000. The net income for the year, after providing for taxation, deferred repairs, contingencies, administration and other charges, amounted to £212,000 and showed an increase of some £14,000 over last year. Although it was still necessary to retain a substantial proportion of the earnings to meet existing and future commitments, the directors had decided, in view of the steady growth of profits in recent years, to make an increase in the amount of the distribution made to ordinary shareholders of 5 per cent., making a total of 15 per cent. this year against 10 per cent. last year.

The statement of the combined assets and liabilities of their subsidiary holding and operating companies showed that total current assets at £2,546,000, exceeded current liabilities standing at £2,078,000 by £468,000, which compared with an excess of £352,000 last year, or in other words an improvement of £116,000 for the year.

Every effort had been made to keep the premises, plant and equipment of the subsidiary operating companies in an efficient state of repair.

The recent Budget announcement of a cut in the rate of E.P.T. from 100 per cent. to 60 per cent. as from 1st January, 1946, should, of course, operate to the considerable benefit of the company.

The report was adopted.

Company Meeting

ASSOCIATED PORTLAN
CEMENT

INADEQUATE PRICES

The forty-sixth ordinary general mee
of the Associated Portland Cement Ma
facturers, Limited, will be held on
December in London.

The following is an extract from the
culated statement of the chairman, Sir
Malcolm Stewart, Bt., O.B.E., Hon.LL
D.L.:—

The profit on trading was less by £239
due to the fall in the tonnage of cem
delivered and to the reduction in the
mitted margin of profit. The sharp dec
in the trading profits and the drop of
per cent. on the dividend from our hold
of B.P.C.M. Limited ordinary stock has b
largely offset by the increased returns fr
investments and from our overseas s
sidiary companies. The profit and l
account shows a total profit of £539,617
reduction of £7,124 on 1943. The propo
dividend is 10 per cent. on the Ordin
stock. This leaves a balance of £2,117
add to the amount carried forward, wh
now stands at £230,888.

The high cost of building constructio
rightly a cause for anxiety. Those mater
least responsible for high costs are cem
and bricks. Our actual average net pr
per ton of cement received by us from
home trade consumer in 1944 was 34
cent. over that received in 1939. The mar
of profit per ton was less by 62 per ce
It is not possible with confidence to forec
improved results for the current year. Ho
ever, we look for an increase of deliver
in 1946 and an improvement in trad
results.

onsequences of revoking the policy of the 1939 hite Paper. It is perfectly certain that the one ay of salvation is to convince the Arab rulers the immense economic advantage to the whole iddle East that would come from a progressive rosperous Jewish Palestine, not an Imperial utpost of any European Power, but a loyal ember of the Arab Confederation.

SIDNEY DARK

Week-end Competitions

No. 828

et by Roger Marvell

Six guineas are offered for the best verses in the yle of Thomas Hardy upon the choice of a Christmas resent. Not more than twenty lines, entries by ecember 18th.

ESULT OF COMPETITION No. 825

et by N. N.

You are invited to submit a list of six objects which you would bury in a place safe from all destruction, in order to give archæologists of 20,000 years hence the best clues to the nature of our 20th-century civilisation. The archæologist's interpretation of the objects is also required. Your choice is limited by two conditions. (1) There must be no form of written, photographic or phonographic material. (2) No object must be larger than a man could carry. Entries not to exceed 250 words.

eport by N. N.

There were really two parts to the competition: to lect objects which represented to those in the know e essentials of the 20th century; and to weave round em plausible but totally misleading interpretations. in-openers won first place, followed by lip-stick, trol lighters, loaded firearms ("The old tradition at the instrument was discharged pointing at other person or animal is probably untrue, as the erging plug would have sufficient velocity to cause jury," C. J.), tinned meat ("Funereal urn, proving at primitive man believed in resurrection of body; gans not identifiable with ours; no bones found— ery, were our ancestors invertebrates?" Pibwob), garettes and holders ("Though of limited scope, is minute wind-instrument has a flute-like quality ell adapted to the fleeting melancholy of a civilisation twilight," J. R. Till), and gas-masks ("Worn by the women, as no man might look on another man's woman," N. P. Meadway). Among the better or more unexpected of individual selections were: a powder puff, "a round feathery object white in colour; probably a child's toy, representing a snowball" (L. V. Upward), and a percolator, "a hermaphrodite deity which gives the earliest date for the Great Change" (E. Berman). Surprisingly, there was only one pickled body (T. A. K.).

First prize to H. C. Withers; the others shared equally between Kenneth Simpson and D. L. Chesteron. The latter's entry will perhaps convince competitors who suggested that models were the only possible answer, that they may lead archæologists even further astray than objects of normal size.

Steel-shafted golf iron (*Sport*).—Insignia of Honour awarded to those who were of truest temper. There were eight grades within this Order of Chivalry. Several people attained grades 8 to 2; but judging from the scarcity of finds, few reached the highest (No. 1) grade of this Order.

Coins (*Currency*).—An offering made in temples to the gods and goddesses depicted on either side of the coins. Notice the supreme goddess ("Tales") carrying a three-pronged staff indicative of the mystic three-in-one cult of the devotees. Obverse: minor deities, usually male.

Drum (*Predominance of rhythmic music*).—Papers in the Record Office suggest that this was a receptacle for the temple offerings. (See under "Coins.")

Rhinoceros horn (*Æsthetic value of mural decoration*).—One only of a pair of horns belonging to the wild beast dilemma. Contemporary writings show how frequently people were impaled on the horns of this savage beast.

Cycle clips (*Popular transport*).—Ornamentation of a primitive people. These rings almost invariably occur in pairs, indicating that they were worn suspended through the ears rather than through the nose.

Cigarette lighter (*Manufacturing ingenuity*).—None of our experts has been able to make this machine work, and its function remains unknown. Research continues.

H. C. WITHERS

The numerous Whitehall fossils prove, on examination, to be of little value. The entire collection shows but one type, and that of negligible interest. More important are the six objects recovered, at the lowest level of the excavation, from an URGENT file.

Nos. 1–3 (touch the sentigraphs overleaf) indicate clearly that XXth century warfare stimulated both revival of obsolete weapons and invention of novelties.

(i) [*War-time Underground Strap*] A "cosh." Professor Sezvitch suggests that this is one of the weapons issued, in 1940, to the home or civil guard (*cf.* early train-bands). Certainly it would have been useful, in a tight corner, against invaders of, say, London's subways.

(ii) [*Saxophone*] A blow-pipe for jungle activities. An offensive weapon.

(iii) [*Cigarette-lighter*] A modification of the atom bomb. We question the reliability of this model.

(iv) [*Denture*] Part of a masticator. Proxy voting implied proxy feeding. Rations, mechanically masticated in Soho, were transmitted by radio to individual soldiers. The experiment was abandoned when the enemy perfected a jamming technique based on raspberries.

(v) and (vi), happily, strengthen the belief that even then embryonic civilised sentiments were stirring.

(v) [*Utility Sock*] A crude joke. (*Cf.* the water-squirting binoculars and explosive cigarettes in the Pre-Civilisation Museum.)

(vi) [*Respirator*] This, with the rubber cloak, boots and metal headgear already catalogued, completes a Santa Claus outfit. The wearer stood, even to adults, for memories of happiness and love.

KENNETH SIMPSON

Exhibits: (1) Mills bomb (rendered innocuous); (2) Small model, *Queen Mary*; (3) Portable wireless; (4) Tin of sardines; (5) Tin-opener; (6) Contraceptive.

Gentlemen.—As you are aware, the charred remnant of the only book to survive the Great Explosion reveals that pre-Atomic Age Man consisted of two species—Brobdingnagian giants and Lilliputian dwarfs. The iron lung in the University of Fiji, employed in Brobdingnagian surgery, shows the mighty stature of these men, and beyond doubt Exhibit 1 in the present collection was used for a similar purpose; it may have been a synthetic heart, or kidney, or some other anatomical substitute. Exhibit 2, on the other hand, is a Lilliputian ship and must have been used to transport those incredibly small people across ponds. Exhibit 3 was apparently a Brobdingnagian listening device, and may have led to the legend about telepathy in pre-explosion times: it was operated by some crude, prehistoric power—probably electricity. Exhibit 4 suggests that the Lilliputians held these fishes—the whales of legend?—sacred, and that on the death of the latter they placed them in sarcophagi, embalmed and ready for their journey to Elysium. Exhibit 5 is a rough surgical instrument, probably used in the initiation rites of Brobdingnagian youth while Exhibit 6 seems to have been either a Lilliputian transport dirigible or a device employed by them for purposes of meteorological observation.

D. L. CHESTERTON

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Personal—continued

HAROLD Laski writes on current affairs every week in "Forward." Published at 26 Civic St., Glasgow, C.4. 2*d.* weekly.

MODERN Quarterly, edited by Dr. John Lewis, reappears on December 1st. The first issue contains Haldane's "Intellectual Liberty and Spiritual Values," Bernal's "Belief and Action," and articles by Cornu, Klingender, N. MacKenzie and A. L. Lloyd. 11*s.* a year, 5*s.* 6*d.* six months. Obtainable from Collet's Subs. Department, 9 Southampton Pl., W.C.1.

INTERESTING Articles in "Socialist Standard": Austerity for Exports—the Reason Why; Trade Union Dissensions in Eire! Cripps's Appeal to Bolster Capitalism! Communists Denounced Nationalisation but now Support it. 3*d.* Stamps to 2 Rugby St., W.C.2.

LABOUR Monthly, December, 1945. "The Indonesian War of Independence," by Arthur Clegg; Notes of the Month by R.P.D.; also articles by Quaestor, Margot Heinemann, Norah Brown & E. Varga. From: Publishers, 134 Ballards Lane, N.3. Post paid 7*d.*

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